Tools for Teaching about Sport for Development and Peace in the Sport Management Classroom

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In two recent Zeigler Lectures, Thibault (2008) and Hums (2009) called on sport management educators to research and teach about topics of relevance in today’s global sport industry. Some of these topics included social entrepreneurship, technology, environmental respect, sport and human rights, and sport for development and peace. This study undertakes work in the realm of sport for development and peace.

According to the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, sport for development and peace refers to “the intentional use of sport, physical activity, and play to attain specific development and peace objectives, most notably, the [United Nations] Millennium Development Goals (2008, p. 3).” In the summer of 2009, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) held an International Forum on Sport for Peace and Development. This Forum produced a set of twelve recommendations, including calls for the Olympic Movement to become more involved in sport for development and peace in areas such as assisting in delivering the United Nations Millennium Development Goals through sport, and emphasizing “that sport has the power to build peace and encourage development, ranging from preventing violence to humanitarian relief and the long-term construction of society” (International Olympic Committee, 2009, p. 1). This is a call to sport managers to extend their definition of the sport industry into nontraditional areas beyond marketing, finance, facility management, or sponsorship. Recently, researchers have begun to focus on how sport managers can more effectively engage in nontraditional sport practices related to sport for development and peace (Lyra, 2007, 2008; Thibault, 2008).

Sport does more than increase fitness, endurance, and strength. Sport can also be used to build personal skills such as handling conflict, problem solving, and improving communication (ICSSPE, 2008). Hence, sport can be used as an intervention strategy to improve the quality of people’s lives. Sport interventions take many forms globally, including the use of sport to help communities heal from conflicts such as war or inter-ethnic violence, or recover from natural disasters such as hurricanes or tsunamis. Since understanding the use of sport in a global context requires an interdisciplinary approach (Chalip, 2005, 2006; Frisby, 2004), Lyra and colleagues designed a number of theory-driven sport interventions to build an interdisciplinary theoretical framework to advance sport for development evidence and context under which sport can leverage positive outcomes (Lyra, 2003; 2007; Lyra, Yiannakis & Kartakouliis 2005; 2006; Lyra, Votsis, Kotziamani, Charalambidou, 2008). Utilizing mixed methods design and grounded theory methodology, Lyra (2007, 2009) proposed a Sport for Peace and Development Theory (SPDT), which refers to attributes, components and procedures that can potentially advance efficient initiation, management and assessment of nontraditional sport interventions aimed to pursue the U.N. Millennium Development Goals. According to the SPDT, sport interventions can be more effectively designed and assessed by considering three main program components: (a) content, (b) process and (c) outcomes.

As sport management educators, we need to be able to explain the presence and purpose of sport for development programs to our students, the future sport managers who will need a global sport vision which includes these nontraditional sport practices. A major challenge facing sport managers and sport management educators is the lack of educational materials available to help them understand what is meant by sport for development and teach sport management students about the concept. Therefore, the purposes of this presentation are to (a) provide an overview of examples of global sport for development projects, (b) provide examples of the application of sport for development practices in different segments of the sport industry, and (c) provide information for sport management educators to assist them when teaching about sport for development in their classrooms.

This presentation first involved the examination of existing electronic databases which host information about sport for development programs around the world (n=784 programs). Descriptive data for each program were gathered and included: (a) location, (b) founding year, (c) target groups, (d) sports/physical activities in the projects, (e) primary project topics, and (f) funding sources. While it may come as no surprise that a large number of programs...
were based in Africa and the sport/physical activity most often represented was soccer, many other interesting facts emerged from the analysis of the demographic data. A large number of programs focused on girls and women in sport, as girls/women in sport were the target group for one of the databases. The websites also included extensive qualitative data in the form of answers to questions about each program’s operation. This information could be classified into three primary areas: (a) innovation, (b) social impact, and (c) sustainability.

This presentation provides an overview of existing sport for development programs and provides recommendations about how sport for development programs can be applied in different segments of the sport industry. Such information can be useful in helping sport management educators frame their classroom discussions on the topic of sport for development and peace.

This project is a part of a larger initiative known as the Sport for Development Global Initiative (Lyra & Wolff, 2009) that aims to advance the body of knowledge of sport for development theory and application.