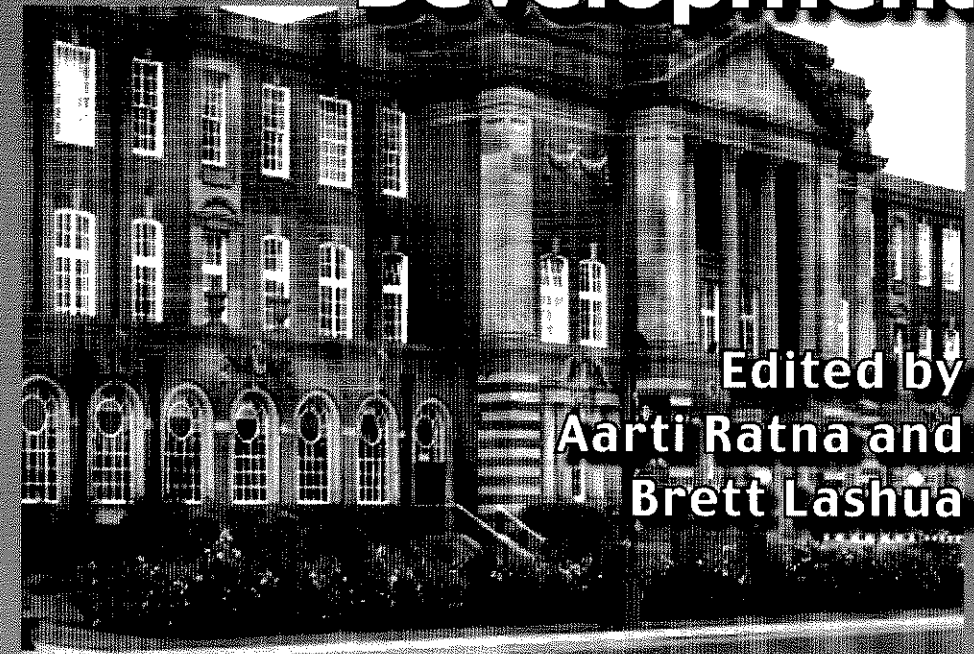


# Community and Inclusion in Leisure Research and Sport Development



Edited by  
Aarti Ratna and  
Brett Lashua

Caution  
Changed  
priorities

**LSA**

**COMMUNITY AND INCLUSION  
IN LEISURE RESEARCH  
AND SPORT DEVELOPMENT**

**Edited by  
Brett Lashua and Aarti Ratna**

**LSA**

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## EDITORS' INTRODUCTION – COMMUNITY AND INCLUSION IN LEISURE RESEARCH AND SPORT DEVELOPMENT

Aarti Ratna and Brett Lashua

Leeds Metropolitan University

This is one of three companion volumes developed from papers originally presented at the *Diversity and Equality in Leisure, Sport and Tourism* conference of the Leisure Studies Association, held at Leeds Metropolitan University in July 2010. The conference identified five major themes: Inclusion and Exclusion; Shifting Policy Discourses about Equality; Alternative Voices; Peace and Reconciliation; and Globalisation and Hybridity. One volume addresses matters concerning Delivering Equality (Long, Fitzgerald and Millward, 2011), and another focuses on Identities, Cultures and Voices (Watson and Harpin, 2011). **The papers in this volume are concerned with issues of Community and Inclusion surrounding leisure research and sport development initiatives.**

Far from reflecting some postmodern vision of the global community as harmonious, the conference presentations about peace and reconciliation indicated that inequalities and injustices are still ubiquitous at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Indeed, global, national and local communities are divided across social divisions of class, 'race', ethnicity, religion, age, sexualities and gender. As identified by Houlihan (2000) and Bairner (2009), sport and politics are not separate entities in the modern world, but sports can provide political weapons to raise issues about such social conflicts. Hence, **a growing number of scholars are increasingly recognising the potential of sport to affect wider changes in educational, welfare and health systems in the UK and in other parts of the world (Bergsgard et al., 2007; Coalter, 2008; Hylton and Bramham, 2008; Kidd and Donnelly, 2000). The focus on these interventions is not about developing sport *per se*, but about using sport as a vehicle to negotiate, resist and transform the world we live in, addressing human rights in areas of social unrest, conflict and division (Kidd and Donnelly, 2000).**

The social exclusion agenda in sport and leisure has been prominent for some years (Hoye et al., 2008; Collins et al., 1999; Long et al., 2002) but tackling historical divisions and deep-rooted inequalities in the social

world undoubtedly takes time. While the state may impose legislation and introduce policies to affect change, people's sense of alienation and non-belonging are less easy to alter (Hylton and Bramham, 2008). Hence, common to the papers in this volume, **empowering local people to address issues within their communities is recognised as a way of effecting positive changes and fostering the sense of social belonging of such local agents.** Also common to these papers were the participatory methods of research adopted by all of the authors. Again, local agents involved in sports intervention projects were given the power to voice their concerns in a way that made sense to them, based upon their lived realities and experiences of their social worlds. Arguably one of the most invigorating aspects of the conference, for audiences at the presentations, was to contemplate how they could/should 'talk the talk' as well as 'walk the walk' in relation to their own research projects. In other words, researchers must consider how personal politics influence their research choices as well as how research findings influence their personal praxis (Jarvie, 2007). As evident in Marxist researcher/activist Ian McDonald's recent work about the gay football team 'Brighton Bandits', his praxis aimed to make a difference to the people and communities with whom he worked (McDonald, 2010).

The scholarship of these researchers shows that engaging in transformational practices is undeniably complex and not easy to achieve but, importantly, it can contribute to real and significant social changes to the lives of both the researcher and the researched. The papers included in this volume especially reveal how 'good practice' in sports intervention projects is possible and a worthy endeavour (Lawson, 2005).

**John Sugden**, in his keynote presentation, argued that sport intervention projects as peace-building in divided communities are complex and should be considered carefully. He dispels the fatalistic notion that sport has limited capacity to affect the re-conciliation process and, at the same time, the idealistic position that sport has the power to unite people regardless of social background. He argues that context is critical to any sporting initiative, utilising a sociologically vigorous approach to understand how cultures are shaped and re-shaped through history, resulting in social tensions that cannot be simply eradicated overnight. With focus on examples from Northern Ireland and Israel, Sugden uses a 'bridge-building' analogy to articulate how sporting interventions may start in local areas, but through a 'ripple' effect, connect divided groups of people across time and space. He also supports the notion of using 'middle-level actors and spaces' to empower local stake-holders as well as meet the demands of external stakeholders, realistically and pragmatically, affecting social change in such deeply divided communities.

Also tackling questions of community divisions, inclusion and exclusion, the chapter based upon the keynote address given by **Alan Bairner** challenges us to rethink urban 'exclusion' through the peripatetic



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wanderings of the *flâneur* and the often fanciful imagining of cities in fiction (i.e., novels). Bairner uses a creative mix of 'writing the city' and 'walking the city' to map out a critical sociological view of urban space. While not claiming that New York City is a unique place, Bairner used his excursions (literary and literal) there more generally as vantage points from which to examine 'exclusion' as a conflation of power, class, 'race', and place. In doing so Bairner crucially invites us to question both the (re)production of exclusion through scholarship and the 'invisibility' of people who endure (or opt for) exclusion.

The chapter by **Jonathan Long, Kevin Hylton, Hannah Lewis, Aarti Ratna and Karl Spracklen** is about the leisure experiences of new migrants in Leeds. Their research focused specifically on new migrants from Poland rather than on the more established Polish communities in the area. Utilising an innovative research method, the researchers asked participants to draw and explain 'maps' that illustrated how and where they undertook leisure activities by themselves and with others. The authors argue that leisure spaces are used by some Polish people as a means of networking with other Polish people. However, leisure spaces were also a means of integrating to this country, e.g. to learn English. Inclusion and freedom of movement across public spaces of leisure in Leeds were common to all the participants of this research. Interestingly, the authors argue that this form of social belonging is not necessarily articulated by other ethnic groups in the city.

Turning to research that aimed to challenge the politics of exclusion, the contribution from **Nico Schulenkorf and Alana Thompson** emphasises the potential for sport to foster multiculturalism, reconciliation, and positive social change in regions of ethnic conflict or intolerance. Taking sport management approaches and strategies as their focus, case studies from Sri Lanka and Australia are highlighted to indicate how sport-for-development programmes can be best managed to 'facilitate rather than dominate' development initiatives. Such approaches recognise the sensitivities involved in locally-led initiatives, whereby sport-for-development agencies work toward fostering respectful cooperation with local communities.

Also positioning sport development initiatives in (post)conflict zones, the paper from **Joel Rookwood** investigates football programmes used as a means of peace-building in Liberia. Noting that sport is increasingly relied upon to (re)build social relations, Rookwood navigates paradoxes of football as a functionalist 'good' in comparison with critical perspectives that situate sport within sites of struggles for power. In both senses Rookwood argues that football is invaluable for promoting peace when delivered in appropriate, value-led programmes that are part of efforts involving wider peace-building structures and governance.

The paper by **Janine Partington and Mick Totten** focuses on a local community development project in Rochdale, identified as a



particular 'hot-spot' for social deprivation in England. Unlike other sports development work, it was mainly run for and by local residents and tenants of the area. The authors, advocating the value of community empowerment, argue that a bottom-up approach to policy-making was fruitful and that evaluations of the project were further used to influence future initiatives. Through the stories of local residents, this paper details how sport and leisure activities were used to effectively transform the lives and experiences of those people. The authors convincingly argue that linking research to praxis can effectively challenge social exclusions and promote social inclusion.

**Kevin Harris and Oscar Mwaanga** address issues regarding student empowerment through volunteering in HE contexts. They report on a student-centred community of practice for volunteering at Southampton Solent University. This community of practice aimed to enrich students' experience of university and better prepare them for the workplace, as well as make contributions to desirable social changes through sport development. Harris and Mwaanga describe students empowered through volunteering as possessing increased critical consciousness and greater capacity for collective action — outcomes that many LSA members who also teach would probably endorse.

**Lee Tucker** locates the particular politics of a local football club *Republica Internationale*. Based in the city of Leeds, the club belongs to a minority sporting culture that centralises a socialist vision in its club constitution; promoting inclusivity and equality ahead of footballing excellence and performance. The club's history and culture reflects the messiness of politics-in-action, revealing the similar and different opinions of established and new members of the club about the club's development. Tucker illustrates this political dynamic through a particular focus on women's representation in the club. Whilst recognising the dominant masculine environment of most sporting cultures, he argues that sexism as well as gender equality is monitored by members of the club themselves through formal and informal spaces of interaction in order to create an inclusive space to play football.

**Mick Totten**, from his standpoint as an activist-researcher and as a long-term member of *Republica Internationale*, further explores the political praxis of his team. Totten reflects on the club's involvement in the Anti-Racism World Cup in Italy as well as its connections to other political football clubs such as *Sankt Pauli in Germany* and *Zapastista* in Mexico. Drawing on his own involvement and interactions with like-minded 'compadres', he illustrates how political resistance is activated locally and internationally by members of *Republica Internationale*. Arguably, resistance to inequalities and injustices are tackled through sporting interventions that aim to empower those involved in these activities as well as to make a difference, however small in focus and scope, to dominant hegemonies operating in the social world.



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# UNITED THROUGH SPORTS: MANAGING SPORT-FOR-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

**Nico Schulenkorf and Alana Thomson**

School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism,  
University of Technology, Sydney

## **Introduction**

Sport has the power to bring people together, bridge differences, and promote communication and understanding (United Nations, 2006: p. 20)

In today's world, many countries are characterised by what has been termed multiculturalism, where varied cultural backgrounds, norms, values, and community interests contribute a rich socio-cultural milieu. Whereas multiculturalism has been praised as largely valuable and beneficial to people and their communities, there are examples where intergroup conflicts and oppression of interests have occurred, and continue to occur over issues such as land rights, status and power. Within these contexts, sport programs and special events have received increasing interest and support by local, state, federal governments and third sector organisations, as a tool for reducing intergroup conflict and facilitating cooperation and inter-community togetherness (Kidd, 2008; Levermore and Beacom, 2009; United Nations, 2003, 2006).

The United Nations (2006) Report of the Secretary-General on "Sport for Development and Peace: The Way Forward" outlines that world leaders have realised that sport activities can "can foster peace and development and can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding". Recently, studies on social development and reconciliation have become subject to some empirical investigation, suggesting that sport and event projects between disparate communities can decrease fierce rivalry and increase community life satisfaction (Gasser and Levinsen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 2010; Skinner, Zakus and Cowell, 2008; Sugden, 2006). Yet, there has been limited empirical research that explores how sport can be operationalised to achieve these social development outcomes, particularly in disadvantaged community settings.

To address this gap, this paper focuses on the organisational approaches and management strategies of two independent sport-for-development projects, which both utilise sport as a strategic instrument to encourage mutual understanding and local empowerment in disadvantaged communities. The first case study from post-war Sri Lanka explores a sport event program designed to bridge ethnic divides between Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim groups. The second case from Australia investigates a sports role model program, which encourages healthy lifestyles and sport participation in remote Aboriginal communities.

## Literature review

It has been suggested that the provision of leisure services and recreational activities can contribute to social development by positively affecting people's day-to-day quality of life. Examples of beneficial social impacts include the celebration and enhancement of cultural traditions, the development of identities, and the building of relations within and between disparate communities (Delaney, 2001; Derrett, 2003; Hilbers, 2005; Lawson, 2005; Schulenkorf, 2009). Chalip (2006: p. 110) highlights the importance of community togetherness and celebration at sport events by stating:

The sporting outcomes may matter to some, but there is a sense that something more important — something that transcends the sport — is going on. It feels as if new energy has been injected into the communal atmosphere — an energy that can be shared by all. Social rules and social distinctions seem less important, and are sometimes suspended altogether.

It is therefore not surprising that in the past decade researchers have moved beyond analysing the performance and economic impacts of sport and events, and started to consider the potential social utility of these initiatives. Here, studies on social development and reconciliation between disparate communities have become subject to some empirical investigation (see e.g. Gasser and Levinsen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 2010; Stidder and Haasner, 2007; Sugden, 2006; Sugden and Bairner, 2000). In *Sport in Divided Societies*, Sugden and Bairner (2000) presented several examples of intergroup sporting encounters and the resulting socio-cultural effects on participating groups. Importantly, the authors highlighted that sport has the potential to impact both positively and negatively on individuals, groups and societies. Indeed, in his recent article on the value of sport, John Sugden (2010: p. 262) suggests, "it is like all collective human endeavours, a social construction which is malleable according to the social forces that surround it". These contrasting notions reflect the duality of sport (Cashman, 1995), and both perspectives are briefly discussed.

From one perspective is the power of sport to divide — described by the metaphor the "war minus the shooting" (Sugden and Bairner, 2000: pp. 7–8). Specific examples include traditional practices and paternal notions of sport, including the utilisation of sport in assimilation policies in the early 20th Century. Sport for assimilation is evident in several international contexts including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia (Cashman, 1995); the native Africans and Europeans of South Africa (Booth, 1998; Hargreaves, 2000); First Nations people of Canada (Hargreaves, 2000), and Aboriginal people of North America (King, 2006). Assimilation is understood as societal attempts to civilise a race, according to Eurocentric and dominant cultural discourses (McConaghy, 2000). This understanding of assimilation is important within a contemporary analysis of sport-for-development, as McConaghy (2000) has argued that within the Australian context there has been a resurgence of these values. Here, the difference between equality and equity becomes pronounced, and the notion of a level playing field is a distant reality (Lynch and Veal, 2006).

A contemporary illustration of the problematic notion of the power of sport is demonstrated by Elder, Pratt and Ellis's (2006) analysis of the Sydney 2000 Games. Their study revealed that by placing an immense emphasis on a sport event as the context through which reconciliation should be advanced, negative social impacts can occur. The authors argue that the discourses of reconciliation surrounding the Sydney Olympics were appropriated as a "(white) nationalist story" (p. 182), which did "little to change power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples" (p. 181).

From another perspective, sport is considered to provide opportunities to unite. Sugden and Bairner (2000: pp. 7–8) use the metaphor of a "community healing process", which suggests that if sport initiatives are approached differently from traditional paternal approaches, positive social outcomes can be achieved. For this to happen, Auld and Case (1997) argue that the overriding goal should be to encourage the integration of people within a community context where they can interact with each other, nurture each other, and participate together in decision-making. Here, sport is considered a powerful tool for reconciliation and a promising vehicle for cross-cultural melting-pot development projects (Kidd, 2008; Schulenkorf, Thomson and Schlenker, 2009; Sugden and Bairner, 2000). According to Misener and Mason (2006), people who participate in sportive or cultural expression are empowered through opportunities to be creative, develop and use skills, and contribute to inclusive social and cultural identities.

In particular, the sociology literature has looked at the experiences of sport participants and communities in overcoming social barriers and contributing to equality and overall social development within and between individuals and groups (Schulenkorf, 2010; Spaaij, 2009; Sugden,



2006, 2010). Various studies suggested that interpersonal and intergroup learning as well as skills transfer can occur through leisure based activities. In support of this claim, Sugden (2006, 2010) and Stidder and Haasner (2007) highlighted the educational benefits of sporting events. They found that sport-based social interventions — if they are locally grounded but professionally managed — can make a modest contribution to wider efforts to promote conflict resolution and a peaceful togetherness between Jewish and Arab children in Israel. Such managed initiatives can educate children as to how core community values such as trust, respect, responsibility and equity relate to their behaviour in practice. As a consequence, children may feel empowered to modify their everyday behaviour in the quest for positive togetherness and a peaceful co-existence between groups.

While these development initiatives are to be applauded, the sport development literature still needs to utilise the empirical findings and provide a comprehensive investigation to see how positive social outcomes from sport projects and events may be maximised through strategic management. Such an investigation would support the paradigm shift that has taken place in parts of the sport event community over the past decade, which is to move beyond the measurement of direct social impacts and instead focus on paths towards achieving lasting social outcomes for host communities. This phenomenon of strategically planning for the maximisation of social or other types of benefits is referred to as leveraging (Chalip, 2004, 2006; O'Brien, 2007). It presents an ex ante strategy with a focus on planning and strategic management to maximise impacts, rather than leaving them to chance (Chalip, 2006; Coalter, 2007; Kellett, Hede and Chalip, 2008; O'Brien and Chalip, 2008; Schulenkorf, 2009).

In their recent article on sport-for-development in Australian Aboriginal communities, Thomson, Darcy and Pearce (2010) identified that most management investigation of sport development has focused on Intervention Programming and Youth Development Programming. The Intervention approach to programming is generally associated with terms such as 'youth at-risk' and 'resilience building' (Quinn, 1999). The Youth Development approach to programming is associated with opportunities for normal socialisation, attempting to strengthen existing environments through enhancing safety, caring relationships and individual life skills (Quinn, 1999). Based on their findings, Thomson *et al.* (2010) collated a series of management considerations pertinent to sport in diverse communities, and a summary of sport development programming (SDP) concepts for successful programming is presented in **Table 1**. Several concepts and recommendations for consideration are highlighted under the main themes of Programme Description and Organisational Structure, and Sport Development Philosophies.

Overall, research has shown that sport managers, event organisers and communities cannot expect positive social impacts and outcomes to

**Table 1:** Summary of Main SDP Concepts for Successful Programming

Concept	Recommendation
<b>Programme Description and Organisational Structure</b>	
1. Governance	Well governed, including objectives and strategic planning (Hoye and Cuskelly, 2007; Morris, Sallybanks, Willis, and Makkai, 2003; Quinn, 1999)
2. Evaluation	Outcomes defined and rigorous evaluation systems (Cameron and MacDougall, 2000; Morris <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Quinn, 1999; Thomas and Dyall, 1999)
3. Funding	Funding streams aligned with organisational objectives, including long-term commitments (Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, and Darcy, 2006; Davis <i>et al.</i> , 1993; Lyons, 2001; Sotiriadou <i>et al.</i> , 2006)
4. Partnerships	Local communities — various sector — long-term (Morris <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Skinner <i>et al.</i> , 2008)
5. Advocacy	Meet social obligations and improve social disparities (Marika <i>et al.</i> , 1992; Quinn, 1999)
<b>Sport Development Philosophies</b>	
1. Activity	Grass Roots or Mass Participation and Elite Sport (Brady, 1991; Houlihan, 2000; Lynch and Veal, 2006a; Skinner <i>et al.</i> , 2008; Sotiriadou <i>et al.</i> , 2006; Stewart <i>et al.</i> , 2004; Thomas and Dyall, 1999). Approach is a contextual decision (Har-greaves, 2000; Skinner <i>et al.</i> , 2008)
2. Programme Development	By the community — community ownership (Atkinson, 1991; Brady, 1991; Cameron and MacDougall, 2000; Quinn, 1999; Skinner <i>et al.</i> , 2008). External to the community — regular contact may encourage community ownership (Cameron and MacDougall, 2000; Davis <i>et al.</i> , 1993; Quinn, 1999)
3. Programme Delivery	In the community — supports community structures and improves access (Morris <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Skinner <i>et al.</i> , 2008). Out of the community — outcomes may be contextual (Morris <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Rawsthorne, 2003)
4. Leaders	Depends on the approach to prior elements of the programme (McCallum and Beltman, 2002; Morris <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Quinn, 1999; Skinner <i>et al.</i> , 2008). Internally developed leadership (Payne, Reynolds, Brown, and Fleming, 2003). Imported leadership (Payne <i>et al.</i> , 2003). Both approaches will achieve different objectives (Payne <i>et al.</i> , 2003)
5. Youth Needs and Roles	Programmes developed in the community, delivered in the community, and utilising internally developed leadership approaches may provide improved opportunities to meet youth needs and provide useful roles for youth (Morris <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Quinn, 1999; Skinner <i>et al.</i> , 2008).

Source: Thomson *et al.* (2010)

occur automatically. As Thomson *et al.* (2010) suggested, it is necessary to provide the right management framework for social development through sport. Following their recommendation, this paper investigates the management approaches and strategies employed by different sport programmers, event organisers and communities to achieve desired social impacts and long-term outcomes. This paper aims to stimulate debate in the growing sport-for-development arena by focusing on two case studies of sport programs conducted in disparate and disadvantaged communities.

## Method

### *Research approach*

The purpose of this paper is to examine the organisational philosophies and management approaches of two independently conducted sport-for-development case studies that look at organisations using sport events and sport projects to achieve specific social outcomes. Within social science, a case study is not simply a single, coherent form of research — according to Stark and Torrance (2005), it is rather an 'approach' to research which is supported by a theoretical base consisting of social interaction and social construction of meaning. Research in both cases was conducted using a qualitative research instrument underpinned by an interpretive/constructivist paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Glesne, 1999; Neuman, 2003).

The first case study from war-torn Sri Lanka explores a sport program designed to bridge ethnic divides between Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim groups. The second case from Australia investigates a sport role model program, which encourages healthy lifestyles and sport participation in remote Aboriginal communities. The researchers recognise the significant differences in social issues exhibited by the two contexts, and by no means attempt to simplify or homogenise these. It is the underpinning organisational approaches where comparisons are made and contrasts are highlighted, providing opportunities to learn.

Interpretive research suggests that access to reality can be socially constructed through language, consciousness and shared meanings (Crotty, 1998; Glesne, 1999; Neuman, 2003). According to Myers (1997), interpretive studies aim to understand the context of a phenomenon through the meanings that people assign to it. As expert knowledge is often situated in local cultures and imbedded in interactional sites, qualitative researchers are required to interact with people, take an inside view from their perspectives and interpret their various inputs. Neuman (2003) highlights that interpretive researchers want to learn what is meaningful or relevant to the people being studied, and how individuals and organisations experience and manage their work, relations and daily life.

### *Data collection and analysis*

To find out about the organisations' management approaches and strategies, semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis techniques were used as the key research methods in the case studies. First, to get a detailed overview of the purpose and goals of the projects, an analysis of documents such as programme manuals, annual reports, organisation policies and websites was undertaken. Building on this, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders were conducted around different sport projects in Sri Lanka and Australia in 2006 and 2007. Beginning with a general list of themes to be discussed, this technique allows for flexibility by including open ended questions for capturing new and unexpected issues and information (Barbour and Schostak, 2005). According to Hoepfl (1997), semi-structured interviewing is the most promising method to find out the 'real' about contemporary cases and phenomena. On the one hand, the researcher is free to probe and explore within the predetermined inquiry area; on the other hand, the interview guide insures a systematic and comprehensive interviewing of multiple subjects within a limited time frame. Questions enquired on organisational history, values, processes, influences, and sport impacts and outcomes.

The authors also actively engaged in experiencing and observing different sport projects in Sri Lanka and Australia. Within these processes, Hoepfl (1997) argues that observation can have different formats, ranging from an 'outside perspective' over a 'passive presence' and 'limited interaction' to 'full participation'. Whereas the first two strategies are mainly used to conduct unobtrusive, non-interacting research studies, the latter two focus on engaging with the phenomenon under investigation. For our studies a limited interaction approach was employed, as "becoming part of the group is the obvious way of studying the group" (Veal, 2006: p. 139). The benefit of limited interaction sees the communities themselves in charge of events and behaviours and avoids the researchers exercising too much control and influence on site. The researchers' main role during observation was therefore to look for 'patterns' in interactions between people, and to try to make sense of the social context under investigation.

The interpretive paradigm underpinning this study highlights that empirical findings from the case studies inform emerging themes and patterns (Glesne, 1999; Neuman, 2003). The computer software used to support the data analysis process was NVivo 8, which assisted the researchers in integrating, indexing and theme-coding the large amount of qualitative data. The data analysis utilised the NVivo free and tree nodes. Free nodes can be described as containers for storing data that "do not assume relationships with other concepts" (Beazley and Richards, 2000: p. 25), whereas tree nodes are those which allow for hierarchical organisation into categories and sub-categories. This categorisation



process resulted in a better understanding of relationships of the data and structures of emerging arguments, and allowed for the coding and reconceptualising of data according to different themes within the areas of sport management and development.

## Findings

In presenting the two comparative case studies, the findings section focuses on those operational approaches that were pertinent to both case studies and provided an opportunity for managerial learning. The Thomson *et al.* (2010) framework is used as a basis to structure the emergent findings from the case studies. From the theme of Programme Description and Organisational Structure the considerations of Partnerships and Advocacy were observed in both case studies. From the theme of Sport Development Philosophy the considerations of Activity, Leadership and Programme Development and Delivery were pertinent to both cases. Importantly, the case studies also revealed significant cultural and contextual implications to be considered in sport-for-development projects. Drawing on representative comments from interviews, observations and document analyses, research findings are presented.

### Case 1: The Asian-German Sports Exchange Programme, Sri Lanka

The Asian-German Sports Exchange Programme (AGSEP) is an NGO which has been conducting sport events and international exchanges between Sri Lankan and European sport teams since 1989. The organisation is based in Marawila, in rural western Sri Lanka, and was founded by the current CEO Dr. Dietmar Döring. Initially, the purpose of AGSEP was to use sport events as a vehicle to enhance tourism in the area; however, since 2002 the primary focus shifted towards integrating sportspeople of Sri Lanka's estranged ethnic groups in inter-community sport camps, events and development workshops.

On a fortnightly basis, AGSEP conducts inter-community sport development projects at a sport complex in Marawila, while large-scale inter-community festivals are staged three to four times a year in different parts of the country. Since the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka in May 2009, AGSEP has placed an additional focus on providing social sport and leisure opportunities for children and youth living in the often neglected north eastern parts of the country. In steady co-operation with Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim community groups and international volunteers, AGSEP aims at 'Connecting Sportspeople' through their 'Games for Peace' activities. Their overall vision is to contribute to the re-establishment of peace in Sri Lanka, highlighting that the concept of peace includes a lot more than simply the absence of war (AGSEP Website, 2010).

## Programme description and organisational structure

### 1. Partnerships

Without reliable local and international partnerships and networks the sport-for-development endeavours of AGSEP could not be realised. Importantly, both personal and professional contacts are essential to stage and advance the sport and event projects, and to overcome social, cultural and economic barriers.

Personal contacts of Dr. Döring established the initial co-operations between key players in the Sri Lankan sport and event industry. As a former coach of the Sri Lankan national table tennis team, Dr. Döring had established links to representatives of clubs and associations, to sport coaches, sponsors, the media and government officials. The existing relationships helped building a network of partners who were willing to contribute to the idea of 'sport for inter-community development'. Having influential people on board allowed for the sharing of additional contacts and a continuous growth of the professional sport network. In 2002, AGSEP was able to sign a cooperation agreement with the German based aid organisation Friedensdorf International (Peace Village International), which secured much needed international funding for the construction of a sport development complex in Marawila.

### 2. Advocacy — awareness and impartiality in a culturally diverse environment

To secure local community support for their initiatives, productive and inclusive community relations are central to AGSEP's endeavours. All projects and events are organised in close co-operation with Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim community groups. According to Dr. Döring, the inclusion of communities' voices in the event design and implementation guarantees that local customs and traditions are respected, and that the emergence of paternalistic or 'colonial' power relationships is avoided. After all, AGSEP aims to empower local communities by facilitating projects and reconciling diverse interests as an impartial mediator between groups.

According to a Sinhalese staff member, impartiality is a key success factor and essential for positive interaction with communities and for the development of institutional trust. The young man described the multicultural AGSEP management team as a 'role model' for positive diversity. He considered the team a "multiplier of fairness" for everyone involved in the projects, because AGSEP's behaviour "reflects on all the people who are contributing to the sport projects and events, and this is passed on to the participants, teachers, spectators, whoever is present on the day".

Furthermore, two symbolic factors were identified as contributing to an impartial perception of AGSEP. First, their inclusive event

campaign 'Games for Peace' and second, their politically neutral logo/ motto 'Connecting Sportspeople'. During several discussions with both local and international sportspeople, it was emphasised that:

The logo does not give any ideas or links towards any political affiliation or philosophical direction, we are just connecting sportspeople. There are a boy and a girl, another boy and a girl, and we try to put a ball in between them and try to make people interact through the medium of sport. And that's it!

### *Sport development philosophies*

#### *1. Activity — flexibility in programming*

In the lead-up phase of all sport projects, AGSEP provides opportunities for local community representatives to contribute to the design and programming of the events. A European staff member highlights the importance of being flexible and willing to react to local demands:

We do not know about [the communities'] problems or about their favours. We don't know what they really want,...how they think this event could actually change something...or what kind of activities should take place so that people would participate or agree to this idea. We can only guess: we are not from this country! To do something good for these people, we have to listen to them.

AGSEP's CEO explains that both respect of local traditions and flexibility in catering for the diverse wants and needs of participating groups are central factors for continuous community support. As examples of recent adjustments in sport programming, he highlights the inclusion of cricket activities as a main sporting element; the change of timing to an earlier start of youth projects; and the inclusion of regular tea breaks during the day, irrespective of ongoing activities — all cricket, football and swimming activities are now paused at 9.30am and 3pm for tea-breaks.

#### *2. Leadership — strategic recruitment of 'change agents'*

AGSEP employs four full-time staff members and is supported by interns and volunteers from mainly European-based universities. The support staff are strategically recruited to build an inter-disciplinary team of 'change agents'. For example, the regularly staged sport-for-development projects — which focus on disadvantaged children and youth and provide trauma-relief activities in post-Tsunami times — are building on volunteers educated in pedagogy, physical education, youth development and sport sociology. On the other hand, larger sport event projects such as inter-cultural festivals or international tournaments are supported by experts in the areas of marketing, tourism, event and business management.

In both cases, change agents are expected to contribute with passion and dedication to the development projects. Interview respondents identified idealism, altruism, social dedication, and positive thinking as vital characteristics of change agents. For example, Karla believed:

Idealists are the way to go! I mean, the AGSEP support staff needs to have quality, but [for example our] swimming instructor doesn't have to be a professional high-profile former world class swimmer. The main thing the volunteers, coaches and supporters need is social skills and idealism.

#### *3. Programme development and delivery — focusing on community empowerment*

The AGSEP team believes that a focus on the long-term social outcomes is more important than achieving short-term project impacts. For this to happen, there is a need for strategic planning for ongoing initiatives, and the commitment for a transfer of responsibility and control from the change agent to the communities. Respondents argued that over time, the change agent should reduce its influence and mainly develop structured activities that communities can organise and implement themselves:

In the end, AGSEP should not be the organiser from above, but from behind. Initiation of a movement is the key factor, just helping to start things, before the movement can carry on through community participation.

The AGSEP CEO describes this supportive approach towards community empowerment and project ownership as a "low profile — high impact" strategy. While he is largely optimistic for this transfer of power to occur "at some stage in the future", others believe that it will be a major task to "engage the groups and foster self initiative, so that [they don't] just expect AGSEP to deliver [but] rather contribute themselves". The critical voices further highlighted a lack of local business and management skills, as well as limited financial and material resources in the target communities as current problem factors for sustainable social and socio-economic development.

## **Case 2: Red Dust Role Models, Australia**

Red Dust Role Models (RDRM) is a non-profit organisation, of which the founders began delivering sport role models based programmes in remote communities in Western Australia and the Northern Territory in the mid 1990s. The programme is based in Melbourne, Australia, and was founded by the current Managing Director, John Van Groningen. The programme came about in response to high youth rates of crime, substance



abuse and suicide experienced in some remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In 2006, Red Dust Role Models was incorporated as a non-profit organisation and in 2008, RDRM expanded operations to the Asia Pacific region including India and Fiji. The particular case discussed here is based on a specific role model tour event observed in a remote community in the Western Australian desert regions in 2006. The tour aimed to demonstrate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth what they may achieve through decisions such as eating the right foods, avoiding harmful substances, keeping physically active and attending school. Recently, the programme has further expanded to include music and arts to deliver healthy lifestyle messages.

### *Programme description and organisational structure*

#### *1. Partnerships*

RDRM demonstrates various sector partnerships through their consultation and collaboration with the WA and NT state government health and education departments, as well as their programme partners coming from various areas of the for-profit sector. The programme has been a collaborative development between the programme director, the organisation's cultural advisor, National Board of Directors, which includes several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the respective Northern Territory and Western Australian government departments and agencies, and specific communities.

While RDRM works closely with government agencies, the majority of the organisation's funding derives from the for-profit sector. However, the managing director attests that RDRM strongly opposes a "cheque book" mentality of sponsorship, and instead:

We like to think that we are not [bowing to someone], or just reacting or responding to the wishes of our corporates ... [They] come on board ... not as ... cheque book sponsors, but as ... programme partners.

The programme partnership requires a commitment of organisational capabilities and resources, including staff time, for programme tour support. In addition, the partnership must demonstrate that the organisation is motivated by social responsibility, rather than commercial interests, as there are limited opportunities for marketing or advertising within the remote areas in which the programme conducts tours.

#### *2. Advocacy — awareness and impartiality in a culturally diverse environment*

Diversity is implicit within this programme, with many non-Indigenous role models from various backgrounds taken into remote communities

where cultural practise and language may be different to non-Indigenous way of life, and English is often not the first language spoken.

The managing director's drive to put together a role model programme was grounded in a desire to "do something practical rather than just talk about things". While advocacy is not a formal objective of the programme, there are notions of reconciliation that are apparent but exist as "unwritten objective[s]". RDRM works closely with communities to ensure local customs and traditions are respected and incorporated wherever possible. Further, an emphasis is placed on cultural orientation for the role models prior to arriving in the community. This facilitates the breaking down of stereotypes and encourages valuing difference and building relationships between the role models and the communities. The managing director would like to "see some real reconciliation come into our mainstream community as a result of these tours". The reason that the notions of reconciliation remain unwritten may be attributed to the fact that the programme is declared a mainstream program that places youth needs ahead of political agendas.

### *Sport development philosophies*

#### *1. Activity — flexibility in programming*

RDRM utilises the attraction of sport and visiting role models to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' youths in a programme promoting positive lifestyle choices (RDRM Website, 2010). The managing director observed that "some of the [communities] cultural observances don't bring the young people into ... community celebration anymore". Sport is therefore utilised within the RDRM programme because it is "the single ... most common interest in the community, sport is what really brings the communities together in celebration". However, the selection of sport is quite strategic; at the time of the programme observation the girls in the community were very fond of softball. A representative softball player was therefore invited along on the community visit, and softball kits remained in the community when the programme finished.

The managing director outlined that although RDRM goes into communities with objectives and a structured programme, the concept of a schedule is not always adhered to. He explained:

The main thing is relationships, are you connecting with the kids? Are they having fun? Are you being a positive example? Then you're meeting the mark ... we're hardly ever able to tick the boxes at the end of the tour and say 'yep, we delivered that message, that message, that message, we did 10 contact hours in the class room, we can strike out all those things'. Forget about it, if they wanna take us out bush for a bush tucker excursion like they did [on the last tour], and leave school for

the whole day, forget [it], you can throw your curriculum out the window. But was it meaningful, it was very meaningful, it was very important, a different way of thinking.

## 2. Leadership — strategic recruitment of 'change agents'

The managing director comments, "I wanna be ... a change agent", and in order to fulfil this goal, the selection of the role models is of critical importance. Apart from RDRM staff, the role models working on the tours include athletes and employees from corporate partner firms. The role models come by referral; specifically, athletes are generally those who are "no-named, low profile" people that have "really got a heart for kids". The managing director shares his attitudes towards bringing people into communities to run programs:

An imported expert always gets a bit more kudos and a bit more profile, and I reckon that's true about our programme ... even though a local person might be able to do it better ... there's a bit of aura, and a bit of kudos that we get, just because we're visitors ... I'm not saying it's long lasting. I'm not saying it's necessarily a good thing, but we have to acknowledge that it happens. We are visitors, we are imports and because of that we generate a bit of enthusiasm in the community.

This strategy works on two levels. Not only does it aid in attracting the attention of the youth in the communities, it also impacts on role models who return home from tours with very changed approaches to the way that they interact with non-Indigenous people. For example, the managing director alluded to the experiences of one of the role models when returning home after a tour and hearing negative remarks about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. He responded by challenging people's assertions by saying:

"Hey, wait a minute, have you ever been out there? Do you actually know an Indigenous person yourself? Do you know that those communities are artificial white fella way? That they've just been thrown into these communities, that they've never lived like that before, and that thousands and thousands of years of cultural momentum has come to a screeching halt in the last 60 years? Do you know those things? No? Ok, well, then shut up, you haven't got a clue." I've heard a guy say stuff like that and ... I think that's fantastic. And that's not even an objective of our programme.

## 3. Programme development and delivery — focusing on community empowerment

The RDRM programme has been developed from outside the communities that it operates in. Therefore, partnerships between RDRM and the communities are of critical importance to the success of the programme and outcomes for the communities. As the managing director

outlined, "sometimes we only have one bite of the cherry with these communities; if something goes wrong ... it's hard to win that trust, and that loyalty back".

The notion of partnerships with communities is pursued with the goal to develop long-term relationships, goals and reciprocal obligations. This is operationalised through a Community Partnerships Proposal (CPP). The CPP outlines both what the organisation, and what the community, will bring to the partnership, to represent an exchange or transaction, rather than charitable services. The CPP is seen as contributing towards long-term and sustainable efforts to achieve "some changes in that social capital of the community". Further to this, it is common practice of the same role models visiting the same communities each time, which is seen to support the long-term goals of the programme for the communities, and allows the programme to continue and sustain its momentum with each programme visit.

## Discussion — strategies for facilitating social development goals

The case studies investigated in this paper demonstrate the importance of consistency of purpose and mission to encourage sport development and participation; advance socio-cultural skills and knowledge; and contribute to mutual respect and understanding between participants and their disparate communities. However, different approaches and management styles were evident; a finding which contributes to previous research that has outlined there can be no one-size fits-all sport-for-development model (Guest, 2009; Skinner *et al.*, 2008). The underpinning organisational approaches and philosophies of AGSEP and RDRM, and their management strategies implemented to achieve the overall mission will now be discussed in relation to Thomson *et al.*'s (2010) management framework. This section further provides implications for sport-for-development initiatives in disadvantaged communities and the need for programmes to be embedded in the community context.

First, with regard to programme description and organisational structure, the literature outlined the importance of partnerships between organisations, local communities and complementary sectors in achieving goals (Morris *et al.*, 2003; Skinner *et al.*, 2008). Adding to this, the cross-sectoral partnerships and networks presented in the case studies mean that programmes are able to ensure financial and operational stability, and target key issues in the communities — an area where other independent policy initiatives have struggled to succeed, especially in the long term (Coalter, 2007, 2010). The combination of external management expertise referred to as 'change agents', combined with the local socio-cultural knowledge embed within the communities is observed as being

a significant underpinning to the projects' overall success in organising the projects both professionally and meaningfully (see also Sugden, 2006, 2010; Thomson *et al.*, 2010). Further, the nature of partnerships across both programs demonstrates their two-way direction: from one side, the support of the partners assists in delivering the programme, while from the other side, the program is able to influence the partners through awareness of issues, education and action.

Second, the idea of advocacy was explained in the literature as organisations having a responsibility to strive to meet social obligations for their target groups, and to reduce social disparities between the communities they are working with (Morris *et al.*, 2003; Quinn, 1999). Interestingly, neither of the case study organisations sought to lobby for policy change, or related actions in the areas of social development and reconciliation. However, it was evident that organisations met social obligations through directly working with groups to improve intergroup relations and people's overall quality of life. For example, both organisations made a long-term commitment to position their activities directly in the disadvantaged communities, and they acted as impartial facilitators, encouraging mediators, and role models for groups. The indirect advocacy approach favoured by both sport programmes demonstrates that a secondary outcome is encouraged, whereby each individual is equipped with their own experiences and stories to share with friends and families — some of which go beyond sport, and may educate the wider community informally.

Third, with regard to sport development philosophies, both cases contributed to a further understanding of the types of activity, programme development and delivery, and leadership approaches to addressing youth needs and roles. The two cases showed a need for flexibility in programming. Flexibility was seen to enable a balance of community interests with program objectives. In both case studies it was necessary to attract and support communities to participate, but also to create an environment conducive to communicating key messages in a culturally meaningful way. Both cases linked into popular local sports: AGSEP with cricket and swimming, and RDRM with softball for the specific community. This meant that the programmes could take advantage of the established interest in the local sports and use these as a platform to connect and communicate with the communities.

It is highlighted here that flexibility in programming does not mean unstructured or not thought through. Both case studies demonstrate the need to adapt programming to local contexts: AGSEP implementing regular tea breaks and RDRM taking breaks from programming to ensure they connect with youth and appreciate their culture. What was observed in these cases is that flexibility in programming becomes the epistemology to strategic program and event design. This is a critical contribution to the sport-for-development literature, as it has been an area where too

often international change agents or western development workers fail, as they try to implement pre-defined programs in culturally specific environments (Coalter, 2010; Guest, 2009).

Importantly, both cases demonstrate that flexibility in programming should be coupled with monitoring and evaluation. For example, through monitoring of the programme AGSEP found the need to implement culturally specific and interest-based components across all activities, e.g. tea breaks for *all* sport types, not just cricket. Similarly, RDRM emphasised the importance of concentrating on the processes of activity delivery, rather than merely counting inputs and outputs through ticking boxes on a curriculum.

Fourth, the idea of Leaders and Youth Needs and Roles is described in the literature as the need to understand that programme development and delivery has inherent influences on the leadership within the programme (Morris *et al.*, 2003; Quinn, 1999; Skinner *et al.*, 2008). The leadership types can therefore influence whether or not there are opportunities for youth to feel useful and valued within the programme setting (Payne, Reynolds, Brown and Fleming, 2003). Following on from the previous idea of programme delivery and programme development, while AGSEP, and to some extent RDRM, have an end goal of empowerment and equipping communities to do for themselves, both cases highlight that there are some critical foundations required before local communities will be in a position to be self-sufficient in governing their own development. This relates to issues within their communities, but also within the broader society. AGSEP and RDRM have brought program opportunities that otherwise might not be available to communities; they have facilitated partnerships which otherwise might not be evident, or which might have taken on a more formal (and less flexible) nature without the platform of sport. Both organisations also contributed importantly to building awareness in the broader community, and encouraging a network of advocates for change and community development.

Fifth, programme development and programme delivery was described in the literature as thinking-through the choices concerning whether the programmes should be from within or outside of the community (Burnett, 2009; Hargreaves, 2000; Skinner *et al.*, 2008; Thomas and Dyal, 1999). While theoretically it is often argued that development programmes should come from within the community, both cases demonstrate challenges to this happening in a practical sense. Both case studies are positioned within politically and socially sensitive, and at times volatile, communities, where basic social interaction and understanding are often complex issues. Therefore, at this point in time, the independent staging of sport-for-development projects by the disadvantaged communities is considered a secondary objective. In fact, observations of both case studies suggested that a full transfer of ownership may not be sustainable and indeed counterproductive to the overall development efforts.



However, what these case studies demonstrate is the importance of external organisations to facilitate rather than dominate development efforts, with a focus on cooperating with local communities and respecting and incorporating their needs. Both AGSEP and RDRM approach this through the strategic recruitment of sport leaders, social experts and change agents in line with the jointly set program objectives. This is seen to ensure there is relevant know-how and a degree of kudos that assists in engaging communities, who may not otherwise be interested in the key messages if they were packaged another way.

Both programmes are very conscious of recruiting suitable change agents and role models who are dedicated to contributing to change within the communities, and in broader society. What becomes apparent is that the community development work is only one aspect in the overall development framework. In fact, attempts to leverage project success become an important issue to influence broader perceptions of governments, policy-makers, media and society (see Chalip, 2004, 2006; O'Brien and Chalip, 2008). Leveraging is considered a large factor in facilitating lasting change for members of these communities, and the programs have only started to realise this enormous potential through the longevity of community partnerships and stability of resources.

## Conclusion

This article has presented the organisational approaches and management strategies of two independent sport-for-development projects, which both utilise sport as a strategic instrument to encourage mutual understanding and social development in disadvantaged communities. What is evident from the two case studies of disparate communities in Sri Lanka and Australia is that the organisational values, types of leadership and the importance of embedding the programmes in the communities to guide decision-making and management processes are what facilitates subsequent operational sustainability and wider social outcomes. While there were consistent themes across the programmes working in two very different contexts, different approaches were often evident in the different socio-economic and socio-cultural environments. These findings contribute to previous research that has outlined that sport-for-development programs may take on a similar form in diverse settings; however, they need to be strategically designed to meet and reflect local demands, as they only take on meaning when they are relevant to local communities.

Overall, findings demonstrate that AGSEP's sport projects go beyond mere sport delivery, and contribute to sustainable socio-cultural development and capacity building for participating communities. Similarly, RDRM is as much about creating relationships as it is about encouraging sport participation, healthy lifestyles, and school attendance. Through adopting an approach where leadership values community interests and

needs, strategies outlined in this document can provide guidance to organisations that are using sport as a vehicle for wider social outcomes, including informal reconciliation, positive social change and overall social development. Looking to the future, there is the need for a greater understanding of how to contribute to sport policy that fosters the development of long-term social outcomes and legacies for disparate and/or diverse communities.

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