Sport for humanitarian action. A Do No Harm approach

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Abstract

Sport for humanitarian action (SHA) refers to the investment and intervention activities, which use sport as an instrument to achieve humanitarian action purposes, such as, alleviate suffering, peace-building, maintain human dignity and protect victims' fundamental rights. Furthermore, sport can be a competent psychosocial method and a significant fund-raising and awareness vehicle.

In order to reach these outcomes, sport for humanitarian action is required to fulfil certain conditions: it must respect the humanitarian principles (the Code of Conduct in Humanitarian Relief of the International Red Cross Crescent Movement); concentrate on non-related sport goals (plus sport approach); follow up a logic process, based on behaviour change; work in partnership with different stakeholders, and put in motion an effective monitoring and evaluation process. The present article describes these conditions, giving a framework for designing a Do no Harm Sport intervention.

Key words: Sport, humanitarian action, humanitarian principles, development, behaviour change, experimental learning.

Resumen

Deporte para la acción humanitaria (DAH) se refiere a las actividades de inversión e intervención que utilizan el deporte como instrumento para lograr propósitos de acción humanitaria, como aliviar el sufrimiento, la construcción de la paz, mantener la dignidad humana y proteger los derechos fundamentales de las víctimas. Asimismo, el deporte puede constituir un método psicosocial competente y un vehículo importante de concienciación y la recaudación de fondos.

Para conseguir esto, se le exigen determinadas condiciones al deporte para la acción humanitaria: debe respetar los principios humanitarios (el Código de Conducta relativo al Socorro del Movimiento Internacional de la Cruz Roja y la Media Luna Roja); concentrarse en metas no relacionadas con el deporte (además del enfoque deportivo); seguir un proceso lógico basado en un cambio de conducta; trabajar en colaboración con distintos participantes, y poner en marcha un proceso efectivo de vigilancia y evaluación. Este artículo describe estas condiciones, proporcionando un marco para diseñar una intervención deportiva de «acción sin daño».

Palabras clave: Deporte, acción humanitaria, principios humanitarios, desarrollo, cambio de conducta, aprendizaje experimental.

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Methodology

The source of information for this paper is essentially secondary. Due to the fact that there is not enough writing exclusively concerning humanitarian action and sport, the author has made use of literature referring to sport for development and peace and has adapted this documentation to the purpose of this paper. In addition to that, the arguments presented in this text are supported by the field experience of the author on the topic of sport in different humanitarian and developing settings.

Introduction

For many people, sport is understood only as a competitive physical activity, but it is indeed *«all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. This includes play; recreation, organized, casual or competitive sport; and indigenous sport or games»*¹. This less divisive approach of sport provides more room for diversity and creativity.

Ten years ago, sport was seen as a by-product of development. The potential of sport as a tool for development and peace was not internationally recognized. The theme of sport was excluded from the mainstream thinking among NGOs and United Nation agencies. The topic of sport was unmentionable; sport was seen as a luxury². However, these decade of advocacy and lobbying in favour of sport for development have created strong awareness and belief of the importance of sport among the UN body, NGOs, governments, private sector and civil society. These beliefs have been translated into: a) different policies; b) international recognition; c) inclusion of sport NGOs' programmes and strategies; and d) the willingness of donors to secure financial means for sport-focused projects.

The momentum created for sport for development has made possible to spread the potential of sport in other areas of intervention. Humanitarian action is one of them.

There is plenty of room for sport to take action in a humanitarian action intervention. The significance of sport lays on the fact that, used in a proper manner, is a catalyst for building social networks by bringing people together and offering the chance to increase the ability to cooperate with outsiders. This new forms of positive relationships will enlarge the «radius of trust», the circle of people among whom cooperative norms are operative³ which will lead us to decrease the risk of political dysfunction, to encourage a proper functioning of formal institutions⁴, to enhance peace-building processes, to improve resilience and to reduce everyday vulnerabilities, which are building blocks for a strong civil society and peaceful and stable democracy.

Potential of Sport in the Humanitarian Field

- 1. Sport as a provider of Human Rights
- 2. Sport as an instrument for peace-building
- 3. Sport as a Preventive tool: reduction of vulnerabilities
- 4. Sport as a curative method: Psychosocial sport programmes
- 5. Sport as fundraising awareness and advocacy vehicle

Potencial of Sport in the Humanitarian Field

I have not come across a definition about sport in (or for) humanitarian action during my literature review. This is an indication about how new or how little research has been done in this field. I will argue that for a sport programme to be considered as an instrument in humanitarian action, it must respect two assumptions:

- Sport should be used as a means to achieve Humanitarian Action goals.
- 2. An intervention through sport should respect the humanitarian principles.

Taking into account the above element, I define sport for humanitarian action as follows:

Sport for humanitarian action refers to the investment and intervention activities which use sport as an instrument to

¹ UN Inter Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, Sport for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the Millenium Development Goals, United Nations, 2003, page V executive summary.

² Van Eekeren, F., «Sport and Development: Challanges in a New Arena», in Vanden Auweele, Malcom, & Meulders, Sport and Development, Leuven, lannoocampus, 2006, pp. 19-34, p. 19.

³ Fukuyama, F., Social Capital and Civil Society, International Monetary Fund Working Paper WP/00/74, IMF, 2000, p. 4.

⁴ Ibid, p. 8.

achieve humanitarian action purposes, such as, alleviate suffering, maintain human dignity, protect the victims' fundamental rights prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of a disasters and advocacy and fundraising for the victims of such disasters. Sport for humanitarian action is based on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence and will respect the Code of Conduct in Humanitarian Relief of the International Red Cross Crescent Movement⁵.

1. Do no harm/ do good through sport

There are different theories to explain and understand the role of sport into society. Each one offers a different angle of viewing sport.

The momentum created during the last ten years of advocacy in favour of sport as an instrument for development and peace has been possible by using this functionalist theory. Under this approach, sport can teach important lessons such as winning and losing, fair play, being part of a team, co-operation, leadership, discipline, tolerance and working towards long term goals. Sport builds health, fitness, self-respect, self-confidence and self-esteem. It is also an innovative, low-cost and effective method to contribute significantly to health, education, development and peace and is a powerful language through which to mobilize societies⁶.

But this theory has two major weaknesses that we should be aware of: (a) it tends to exaggerate the positive consequences of sport and sport participation and underestimates the negative effects of sport; and b) it does not recognize that sports are social creations that take many forms as they are shaped and defined by people interacting with each other⁷ ⁸.

Sport can also produce negative outcomes. It can also lead to violence, corruption, discrimination, excessive nationalism, human rights abuses, cheating and drug abuse⁹. A great emphasis on egocentric values through sport such as power, honour, money and fame leads participants to aggression, intolerance, depression, fear damage to health and abuse of human rights. This tendency may lead to cynicism, corruption and abuse in coaches and sport managers¹⁰. Even sports, such as football, have been accused of starting wars. The 1969 'Football War' between Honduras and El Salvador is well known. It began as a riot in the qualifier for the 1970 World Cup and finished with the loss of 2000 people lives in about six days¹¹

However, this pessimist «Conflict theoretical perspective» of explaining sport, focuses on elite sport, which is only a small part of the sport movement¹³ and definitely not the one that sport for humanitarian action promotes (instead SHA advocates for a «sport for all» approach).

SHA depends entirely upon the manner in which sport is employed. These two sides of sport (functionalist and conflict theories) show that sport itself is neutral or empty¹⁴. This is the reason why the Olympic anthropologist John MacAloon calls sport «an empty cultural form». As Guest described¹⁵ «Sport is filled in with meanings, values, and ideas by the culture in which it takes place and the individuals who take part». The positive or negative outcomes will depend on the interaction and relation-

⁵ Based on the IPC definition of Sport for Development.

⁶ UN Inter Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, op. cit., p. 24.

⁷ Coakley, J., 2003, op. cit., p. 40.

⁸ Larkin, J., & Razack, S., «*Gender, Sport and Development*», in University of Toronto, *Literature Review on Sport for Development and Peace*, Toronto, University of Toronto, 2007, pp. 89-123, p. 94.

 $^{^{9}}$ UN Inter Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁰ De Donder, V, «Children Harmed by Sports: on the Threat to positive Values in Children's and Youth Sport», in Vandem Auweele, Malcom, & Meulders, Sport and Development Leuveb, Lanoocampus, 2006, pp. 43-55, p. 43.

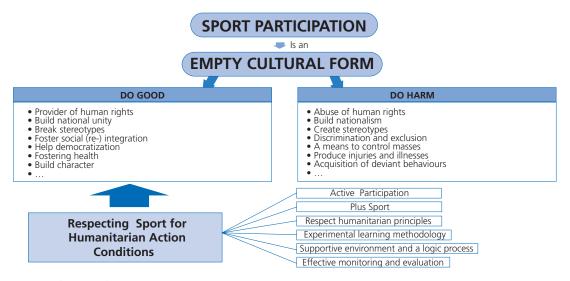
¹¹ BBC Website, Football - a Matter of Life and Death, 2002, retrieved July 7, 2008, from http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A702848

¹² Armed Conflict Events Database, *Soccer War 1969*, 2000, retrieved 7 July, 2008, from http://www.onwar.com/aced/data/sierra/soccer1969. htm

¹³ Coakley, J., 2003, op. cit. p. 57.

¹⁴ Guest, A. M., Thinking both Critically and Positively about Development Through Sport, Sport and Development International Plataform, retrieved June 25, 2008, from http://www.sportanddev.org/en/articles/thinking-both-critically-and-positively-about-development-through-sport/index.htm

¹⁵ Ibid.



Do good through sport (Own creation)

ships that the individual will gain from all the actors involved in the process (coaches, team members, family, sport managers...). It is not sport itself, but the people the motor of changes¹⁶ and therefore, the creation of a supportive environment to acquire positive changes is a key element of this process. As Coakley¹⁷ put it:

Sports are sites where young people have often powerful and exciting physical and social experiences. When they are organized so that young people can receive thoughtful guidance from adults who are sensitive to what young people need in order to develop self-respect and become connected to the rest of the community, good outcomes are likely.

However, it is possible to maximize the positive effects of sport (do good) and minimize possible negatives outcomes (do not harm) that an intervention may have by respecting certain conditions. As Patriksson¹⁸ wrote:

Sport, like most activities....has the potential of producing both positive and negative outcomes. Questions like 'what conditions are necessary for sport to have beneficial outcomes?' must be asked more often.

In an attempt to respond to Patriksson questions, this chapter will explain six conditions which are imperative elements of an SHA programme:

- 1. Active participation: increase participation is a clear objective of all programmes: «sport for all» approach.
- 2. Focus primarily on plus sport approach: sport as an instrument to address a number of broader social issues.
- 3. Based on experimental learning methodology.
- 4. Put it in motion a supportive environment and a logic process to acquire the anticipated positive behaviours.
- Effective monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of our intervention.
- 6. Respect humanitarian principles.

of European Ministers Responsible for Sport), Lisbon, Council of Europe, 1995, p. 128.

¹⁶ Ihid

¹⁷ Coakley, J. 2003, op. cit. p. 183.

¹⁸ Patriksson, M, «Significance of Sport for Society. Health, Socialisation, Economy: A Scientific Review», (Prepared for the 8th Conference

2. Conditions for a sport for humanitarian action programmes

2.1. Active participation

«Taking part in sport activities is certainly a necessary condition for desired outcomes to be achieved and increasing participation is a clear objective of all sport programmes¹⁹. Although a large bulk of children and adults of a community likes to play and practice sport, in a humanitarian context, due to personal and environmental constraints, participating in sport activities can became a burden for them. Many of the community members are very busy with their own survival. Individuals may not have enough time to dedicate to sport activities either as a participant or as a coach. Adults may be engaged in reconstructions activities or working the land; children may not be encouraged to participate in sport activities as they may be obliged to accomplish some domestic duties such as collecting firewood or fetching water. Community leaders will not pay a great deal of attention to sport activities as they may perceive them as unnecessary in a humanitarian situation.

Sport is not only for a few individuals of the community with high motor and sport skills. Sport is for everyone interested in it. SHA must be based on a sport for all approach where any individual can participate regardless of race, social class, gender and disabilities. This becomes particularly significant when an SHA intervention seeks not only individual but community outcomes.

It does not mean that every SHA programme is open for everyone. Interventions may be restricted to those participants that fulfil certain characteristics (sport activities only for women, child soldiers or people with disabilities, etc.). This kind of positive discrimination seeks to protect those individuals with greater needs, which concords with the principle of impartiality of humanitarian action²⁰.

The power of sport comes with its popularities and the effect and impact come with its implementation ...The implementation and how sport is being preserved is the key, not sport alone.

2.2. Plus sport versus plus approach

Sport programmes can be categorised depending on the use we give to sport in two types: Sport plus or plus sport. The most important difference between them lies in their aims, outcomes and the methodology they use to reach them.

Sport plus activities concentrate on sport itself and are designed to develop sustainable sporting organisations. The main aim of such programmes is sporting inclusion; this is to remove the barriers to sport participation in the community and/ or the development of physical literacy and basic sporting skills²³. Desired outcomes expected of sport plus projects include²⁴:

- General increases in participation and among target groups.
- Increased frequency of participation.
- Opportunities to develop sporting skills and expertise and to move from recreational participation to competition or excellence.
- The training and support of leaders and coaches.
- The establishment of links between school/sports clubs/ wider community.
- Increased number of sporting teams/clubs.
- Increased club memberships.

However, SHA outcomes do not happen simply by placing a ball onto the field and let the children play. The positive benefits of sport are an indirect product of the context and social interaction that is possible through sport instead of a direct result of participating in sport activities²¹. As Kvalsund²² wrote:

¹⁹ Coalter, F., Sport and Community Development: A Manual. Research Report no. 86, Edinburgh, Sportscotland, 2002, p. 25.

²⁰ Rey, F., & de Currea-Lugo, V., *El debate Humanitario*, Barcelona, Icaria Editorial, 1992.

²¹ University of Toronto, *Literature Reviews on Sport for Development and Peace*, Toronto, 2007, p. 4.

²² Kvalsund, P, *Sport and Peace Building*, 2007, retrieved July 4, 2008, fromhttp://www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/html/resources/E0/E034DC82-

 $^{{\}tt E2BB-4827-AC8B-E7D1BDFCB288/Sport\%20} and {\tt \%20Peace\%20paper\%20Pelle\%20Kvalsund.pdf}$

²³ Coalter, F., «Sport in Development: Process Evaluation and Organisational Development» in Vanden Ausweele, Malcolm, & Meulders, Sport and Development, Leuven, LannooCampus. 2006, pp. 149-16, p. 3.

²⁴ Coalter, F., 2002, op. cit. p. 37.

On the other hand, the **plus sport** approach centres its attention on achieving non-sporting results. It puts much more emphasis on sport as a means to an end²⁵. Although increasing sport participation in also an objective of plus sport, this approach goes one step further and seeks to contribute to achieve, in our case, humanitarian action goals. Sport inclusion, therefore, is one transitional outcome to greater humanitarian results.

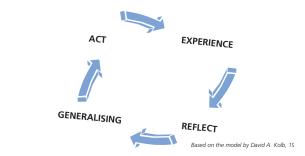
In plus sport approach, sport is integrated into other activities, such as programmes for street children, psychosocial interventions, or into the management of refugee camps²⁶.

Needless to say that sport for humanitarian action must focus on a plus sport approach. However, as it has been mentioned earlier, it is not sport alone what achieve these outcomes, but the way sport is provided; therefore a proper methodology in sport for humanitarian action is as crucial element of the process.

2.3. Experimental learning methodology

Learning is «the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience»²⁷, where «knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it»²⁸. Having these two concepts in mind, by providing only «here and now» concrete experience through sport, a programme may have an impact in the physical fitness of its participants or may help to enhance motor or sport players' skills, but it is uncertain that individuals will acquire, knowledge or skills connected with sport for humanitarian action goals. The use of feedback to transform this experience or practice into capacities is an essential element of the learning process²⁹.

This type of methodology that combines experience plus reflection is called experimental learning. It is built on the theories of Kurt Lewin, John Dewey, Jaen Piaget, Paulo Freire and others³⁰. Learning is defined as a major process of human adaptation involving the physical, emotional, social and cognitive aspect of a person³¹. For that reason, the experimental learning model is based on a learning cycle or spiral where the learner experiences, reflects, thinks, and acts in a repetitive process that is responsive to the learning situation and what is being learned³². The next figure simplifies the experimental learning cycle:



Experimental Learning Cycle

Expressed in another way, learning can be maximised by actively involving the participant in the process as much as possible. This learning process is not only to partake in sport activities, but to analyse the experience of the individuals, draw conclusions and try to apply the lessons learned in future³³.

Let's illustrate these models with a sport activity example in order to highlight the importance of the «after-playing» process.

²⁵ Coalter, 2006, op. cit. p. 2.

 $^{^{26}}$ Auweele; Malcom; Meulders (EDS.), Sport and Development, Leuven, lannoocampus, 2006, p. 12.

²⁷ Kolb, Y. A., & Kolb, A. D., *«Experiential Learning Theory: A Dynamic, Holistic Approach to Management Learning, Education and Development»*, in Fukani, & Armstrong, *Handbook of Management Learning, Education and Development*, London, Sage Publications, 2008.

²⁸ Kolb, A. D., Experimental Learning.Experience as the Source of Learning and developmnet, New Jersey, Prentke-Hall, 1984, p. 41.

²⁹ *ibid*, p. 21.

³⁰ ibid.

³¹ Kolb, Y. A., & Kolb, A. D, op. cit.

³² ibio

³³ SALTO-YOUTH, Fit for Life. Using Sports as an Educational Tool for the Inclusion of Young People with Fewer Opportunities, Brussel, SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre, 2004, p. 40.

«Outside the circle» is one of the sport activities that project coordinators of the International NGO Right To Play uses in Nakivale Refugee Settlement (Uganda) as part of its HIV/AIDS prevention Programme.

The instructions of the game are simple:

1) Participants form a close and tight circle by linking arms; 2) put an object (a ball, a stone, a box...) in the middle of the circle; 3) ask one of the participants to be outside the circle and ask them to try and get inside the circle and get the object; 4) the mission of the people forming the circle is to avoid that "the outsider" get the object; 5) after the first round, ask the participants in a circle to take one step back (people in the circle with hold hand), so the circle is bigger; 6) once again, ask the person outside the circle to try and get in the middle of the circle to get the object; 7) after the second round, ask the participants in a circle to take another step back, so the circle is larger than before; 8) ask the person outside the circle to try again to get into the middle of circle to get the object; 9) repeat this process until it becomes very easy for "the outsider" to get the object.

This is an enjoyable and fun activity were participants can unconsciously learn about cooperation, team work or develop some basic motor skills, but if we end up the activity at this stage, it becomes impossible to provide them with knowledge regarding HIV prevention, which is the objective of this activity.

The second and necessary step of any SHA activity is the follow-up. At this stage, participants are guided by coaches to reflect on their experience. The role of the coaches is central as they are the ones to conduct the player's experiences to the outcomes that a sport for humanitarian action programme intends to achieve. Coaches/facilitators will lead the process of participants' reflection and thinking by providing feedback and facilitate open discussion.

In our example, as we plan to help them understand abstract concept³⁴ such as white cell, immune system and the relationship between immune system and HIV/AIDS, we conduct a follow-up by conducting an open discussion (asking and explaining to participants certain theoretical aspects):

Needless to say, the open discussion has to be in accordance with the cognitive level and skills of participants. While the discussion is very basic for children at school age, it can be more profound for children at secondary school by, for example, explaining the different white cells that the human immune system has and how HIV attacks these different white cells (In the case, the sport activity can be modify to help to comprehend these concepts: E.g. having different sub-groups in the circle that later on will represent the different white cells).

The follow-up phase is so fundamental that by changing the discussion, the same sport activity can serve for other purposes. Following our example, «outside the circle» can be also used to reinforce the importance of social networks and cooperation in a community affected by a conflict. In this case, «the outsider» represents the warring party that is threatening the community (let's say paramilitary groups); by cooperating together the community can support themselves and reduce their vulnerabilities to this hazard.

As we want to lay emphasis on the success of the community (instead of failure of the immune system) it will be wise to start the game with a wider circle and finish up with a tight circle shoulder to shoulder, so participants have the sense of accomplishment. To sum up, by adapting sport activities and providing a proper feedback from coaches/facilitators, we ensure that the sport activity turns into something else than just fun and joy. Participants reflect and think on their experiences and acquire knowledge, skills and attitude that helps to reduce vul-

linkings sport activity (experience) with abstract concepts the chances of understanding those concepts are far higher.

a) What was the result when the circle was tight?; b) What was the result when the circle was bigger?; c) Ask the participants, when the circle was bigger if it was easier for the person outside the circle to get in. If so why? d) Show that when a participant tried to get into the circle and could not that is a healthy immune system fighting off the disease; e) However when the object from outside of the circle invades the circle it weakens the body's immune system; f) When you are deprived of defences, such as when the circle is bigger, there is a greater opening for the virus and infections, such as TB and pneumonia, to enter into your body.

³⁴ These abstract concepts that children (and illiterate people in general) cannot see or feel are sometime difficult for them to understand. By

nerabilities, to foster peace-building, or to cure psychosocial problems.

Once the participants are aware, understand and believe that certain behaviour will help them to get personal and community benefits (for example stay away from HIV/AIDS), they are ready to take action and integrate these behaviours learned throughout sport into their daily lives. However in order to do so, I will argue that individuals need to have a supportive environment (external factors) that help them to acquire, generalize and apply these behaviours learned through sport.

2.4. Supportive environment and a logic process

A logic Intervention

The outcomes of an SHA programme is not to supply material items, such as food, water or shelter but to provide communities affected by a disaster, with positive behaviours (and therefore knowledge, skills and attitudes) that will contribute to alleviate their suffering and maintain their human dignity. In order to plan an appropriate and successful sport for humanitarian action intervention, it is essential to understand the common elements that can influence or modify people's behaviours. There are many theories that have been developed to explain individual behaviour. One of these theories is the Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change. Prochaska & DiClemente³⁵ suggested that behaviour changes take place in five distinct stages through which people move on a cyclical pattern:

- Pre-contemplation: individuals are not aware of the benefits that a new way of behaving may have and therefore changing behaviour is not considered.
- Contemplation: Something happens to prompt individuals start to think about change (for example a sport activity). He/she becomes aware of the positive outcomes that performing a new behaviour may have and he/she is becoming more motivated to do so.
- Preparation: Prepare people to undertake the desired change. At this stage, the individual gathers information,

- finding out how to achieve the change, decides when change should take place and learns the skills necessary to behave in a certain way (skill development).
- Action: Initial adoption of the new activity or behaviour. People make changes, acting on previous decision, experience, information, new skills and motivation to make the change.
- Maintenance: integrate the new behaviour into lifestyle. It is characterized by the stabilization of behaviour change and the avoidance of relapse.

A sport for humanitarian programme must take into consideration these stages and design different sport activities to foster the behaviour change process. Thus, the first set of sport activities should have the purpose of bringing together those people the programme has identified as target group (child soldier, women, the whole community...). Sport is used as a lure, a safe and fun way to attract people to be involved in humanitarian action activities.

In order to do so, it is important to asses which are the interests and motivations of the target group. For instance in Nakivale Refugee settlement (Uganda) women were keener on netball while men were more interested in football. Both groups were fond of volleyball. Having said this, we may consider planning some netball activities if we intend to target women, football if we are targeting men or volleyball in case we intend to address both groups together.

It is very important to emphasize that a sport programme should always promote the intrinsic motivation of their participants: which is to take part in sport activities because they bring joy and happiness and not because they can bring external rewards (for instance a uniform, free snacks and drinks or even a medal or money). Even when our purpose is a non-sport related goal, we have to make sure that our activities are enjoyable experiences for the participants. Keeping a high intrinsic motivation in children depends on a good planning intervention. The sport activities have to be adapted to the needs and skill levels of the participants. Doing so, we minimise the risk of individuals participating in a sport programme expecting an external reward.

³⁵ Prochaska & Di Clemente, «Stages of Change in the Modification of Problem Behaviour», in Hersen, & Miller, *Progress in Behaviour Modification*, Sycamore, Sycamore Press, 1992.

Once the target group is regularly participating in sport activities (which can be measured by the number of people who are participating), the role of sport is to create a social space for positive interaction and skill development. The purpose is to make participants aware and believe that the pros (benefits, positive outcomes) outweigh the cons (cost, anticipated negative outcomes) of a performing behaviour (for example, peaceful conflict resolution versus violence). While in the pre-contemplation phase we did not pay special attention to the reflection period or follow-up, this part becomes crucial in the contemplation and preparation stages as a mode to give the information that the person is seeking and support and motivate him/her to decide to take action.

A sport for humanitarian action programme does not stop once the individual has taken action; the integration of the new behaviours into their custom takes time and a sport for humanitarian action programme must ensure that people are provided with the necessary support and resources to act in the manner advised.

Which kind of sport activity?

While participating in this kind of activities, individuals are unconsciously involved in a multidimensional learning process. The most palpable dimension is of course the physical learning (how to run, jump, maintain balance, co-ordination, etc.) but there are also a diversity of social learning processes taking place such as learning to be part of a team, to cooperate, to trust, respect for other and so on. Social learning elements are present in all sports activities ³⁶. However some sport activities are better placed at bringing across specific learning elements than others³⁷. For instance, while «target-sport activities» such as archery focus more on learning elements such as precision, self-control and concentration, dancing puts more emphasis on creativity and expressing emotions. While football concentrates on teamwork and cooperation, long distance running pays more attention to independence, self-discipline and coping with challenges.

Most sports can be characterized by varying combinations of different elements, which give an idea of the multiple option of sport as a provider of learning experiences³⁸:

- Individual, Partner and Team activities. Each of these categories is based on differing social processes and interactions, providing different experiences for participants.
- Cognitive, Motor and Physical Skills. Games such as football and basketball require an understanding of rules, strategy and spatial awareness (cognitive), while other like aerobics focus on motor skills while weightlifting puts much of its emphasis on physical skills.
- Contact and Non-contact. Martial arts and rugby are examples of contact sports while volleyball is a non-contact sport. It is important to mention that there is a level of aggressiveness in many contact sports that if it is not dealt with caution can lead to violence. For instance it will not be a wise idea to use a contact sport with two teams that are already confronted and with too much tension between them.
- Competitive and Recreational. Nearly all sports can be undertaken as a recreational activity (in which winning and losing are deemed relatively unimportant) or competitively (where winning and losing are central to the experience).
- Outdoor or indoor. While many activities can be played indoor or outdoor, depending on the target group we may consider to do an activity outdoor, in contact with the environment or indoor, in isolation of the environment (for example for the first experiences of a psychosocial sport program, or a women group in a very femalerestrictive environment).
- With great deal of sport equipment or with none or limited sport equipment. While some sport activities need special equipment and infrastructure, many other do not need much investment. Some sport activities do not require any material at all. Looking at the sustainability of the project, sport for humanitarian action should use activities that involve none or limited material resources.

To sum up, it is fundamental to know which sport activities can be used towards what ends. Rather than choosing just one activity, it is interesting to combine related activities to include extra dimensions to the learning process. Beyond this, it is up to the participants to determine which activity interests them the most³⁹.

³⁶ Compared to the physical side, the social learning dimensions are far more intangible and are harder to recognize and measure.

³⁷ SALTO-YOUTH, op. cit. p. 34.

³⁸ based on Coalter, 2002, op. cit. p. 26.

³⁹ SALTO-YOUTH, op. cit. p. 34.

A supportive environment

The idea that sports build character is very popular and very difficult to measure empirically. A great deal of studies makes clear that sport participation alone does not lead to any particular personality or set of psychosocial characteristics⁴⁰.

Having strong intentions to change and the necessary skills do not guarantee that a behaviour change will occur. Behaviour changes can only take place in the context of an enable or supportive environment⁴¹. As Passer & Smith wrote⁴²: «A fundamental attribution error occurs when we underestimate the impact of the environment and overestimate the role of personal factors when explaining behaviour change».

There are many external factors that have been found to have influences, positive or negative, on behaviour. The next figure represents some of these external factors⁴³:

SOCIAL FEATURES

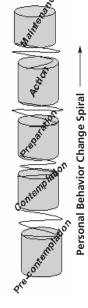
- nature of personal relationships; expectations of class, position, age, gender; access to knowledge, information

CULTURAL FEATURES

- the behaviours and attitudes considered acceptable in given contexts - eg. relating to sex, gender, drugs, leisure, participation.

ETHICAL & SPIRITUAL FEATURES

- influence of personal and shared values and discussion about moral systems from which those are derived - can include rituals, religion and rights of passage.



LEGAL FEATURES

- laws determining what people can do and activities to encourage observance of those laws.

POLITICAL FEATURES

- systems of governance in which change will have to take place - can, for example, limit access to information and involvement in social action.

RESOURCE FEATURES

- affect what is required to make things happen - covers human, financial and material resources; community knowledge and skills; and items for exchange.

Behaviour Change Spiral in the context of the Enabling Environment. (Source: The Behaviour Change spiral from «What do they want us to do now?» AFAO 1996)

⁴⁰ Guest, op. cit.

⁴¹ In 1991, a social scientists workshop that took place in Washington concluded that for a given behaviour to occur, an individual must (a) have strong intentions to perform the behaviour, (b) have the necessary skills to do so and (c) not be restricted by environmental constraints. (Fishbein, 1991).

⁴² Cited by Lundholm, K., & Renaud, R., *The Five Elements Guide.* Structured Information to Help Engage Individuals to Act Strategically To-

wards Sustainability. A Guide Developed during the Master's Programme Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability, Karlskrona (Sweden), Blekinge Tekniska Högskola, 2005, p. 51.

⁴³ Parnell, B., What Do They Want Us To Do Now?, retrieved August 8, 2008, from paper published by the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisation, Sydney, 1996, http://www.comminit.com/en/node/27042/36

These factors do not only lay outside the individual control, but, many of them, outside a sport for humanitarian action intervention. This is extremely important to take into account: a well designed and planned sport for humanitarian action programme working in isolation is not guarantee of success. The probability of success of a sport for humanitarian action intervention will be minimum without a) having the support of the community, b) being culturally and morally accepted, c) if there is not political will and d) not enough economic and human resources available

Here are some examples: when families are having economic constrains, they may not support their children to participate in SHA activities; in a fundamentalist Muslim or Christian area, local leaders may oppose (and even sabotage) any kind of female empowerment through sport; setting a football women's league in a refugee settlement may not be successful when football is seen by the community as a «sport only for men».

A comprehensive and multi-agency approach⁴⁴, involving all sectors of the community and stakeholders are necessary to guarantee positive outcomes. As sport for humanitarian action cannot assure a proper supportive environment for its programmes by itself, it needs the establishment of partnerships with different stakeholders, from community based Organizations to national and international institutions (both, governmental and non-governmental). SHA programmes must be delivered as part of a broad and integrated approach addressing humanitarian issues.

There are three areas of partnerships where sport for humanitarian action should look at: (1) programme implementation (2) resources mobilization and (3) advocacy. For instance, in a HIV/AIDS prevention programme through sport, it is illogical to promote the use of condoms and be faithful to tackle HIV/AIDS if there is no other institution or organization that can provide free or accessible HIV test for the participants (program implementation partnership). Another NGO or Agency could offer free condoms (resources mobilization),

The influences of the environment in a SHA programme make monitoring and evaluation even harder than already is, as we will analyze in the next section.

2.5. Effective monitoring and evaluation of outcomes' intervention

The need to take into account issues of monitoring and evaluation are tremendously important not only because it is requested by donors, but because we can learn to do our work better. There are few features that a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for an SHA programme should take into consideration:

A. Based on theory-driven evaluation

A Theory of Change is a specific and measurable description of a social change initiative that forms the basis for strategic planning, on-going decision-making and evaluation. It shows the relationships between resources, activities, outputs, and various outcomes and argues that in order to reach a long term goal a number of short-term goals and set of activities are necessary⁴⁵.

Carol Weiss, one of the most active scholars in this area, portrays theory of change as the set of assumptions that explain the mini-steps that lead to the long term goal. She argues that a lack of clarity about steps that

must be taken to reach a long term outcome not only makes the task of evaluating a complex initiative challenging, but reduces the likelihood that all of the important factors related to the long term goal will be addressed⁴⁶.

while other stakeholders advocate for the establishment of policies and laws in pro of people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

⁴⁴ Donnelly, Sdarnell, & Coakley, «*The Use of Sport to Foster Child and Youth Development and Education*», in University of Toronto, *Literature Review on Sport for Development and Peace*. Toronto, University of Toronto, 2008, pp. 7-48.

 $^{^{\}rm 45}$ ActKnowledge, Theory of Change Website, retrieved August 20, 2008, from www.theoryofchange.org

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Having a Theory of Change approach provides an SHA with⁴⁷:

- A clear and testable hypothesis about how change will occur that not only allows you to be accountable for results, but also makes your results more credible because they were predicted to occur in a certain way
- A visual representation of the change you want to see in your community and how you expect it to come about
- A blueprint for evaluation with measurable indicators of success identified
- An agreement among stakeholders about what defines success and what it takes to get there
- A powerful communication tool to capture the complexity of your initiative

However, in order to gain all these benefits, an SHA must lay on convincing and validated assumptions. An SHA intervention based on the five stages behaviour⁴⁸ change theory, as explained earlier, will provide these scientific assumptions. Having these five different stages is extremely useful for monitoring and evaluation of an SHA programme because we can assess the development of our programme by measuring the level of achievement of the different stages. Each stage is having different activities and therefore different outcomes and indicators to look at. For instance, on the Pre-contemplation phase, we will concentrate on awareness and social mobilization activities, while in the Preparation stage the programme will focus more in skill development by implementing workshops and training.

B. Evaluating the environment

The possibility to claim credit for outcomes that were predicted in an SHA programme is not hundred per cent assured by a theory-driven approach. As explained earlier, personal factors are not the only variables that influence behaviour change; participants are subjected to environment influences. As a result, it is necessary to evaluate not only the SHA intervention but the environment or context where the intervention is taking place. It

C. Baseline survey

An initial baseline survey is very often forgotten either intentionally (because of its cost) or unintentionally, creating a burden to assess the impact of our action in future. In order to control some of these environmental variables, research method theories suggest the creation of treatment group (random assignment to participants) or group control (non-participation). However, due to ethical considerations, these means are not usually available for SHA programmes. Instead SHA can use a less rigorous approach such as a before-and-after approach⁵⁰.

The first step before planning and implementing an SHA is a baseline survey, which is information gathering regarding (a) the needs of individuals and communities, (b) the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of the behaviour that the programme intends to change or provide, (c) stakeholders and (d) the positive and negative influence of the environment. The baseline survey will not only enable to plan an SHA intervention attending the specific needs of the target group, but will be very valuable information to monitor and evaluate the program by comparing these results with the information collected right after the SHA implementation (to measure if participants area taking action: applying the knowledge and skills learned) and after a period of time of the implementation of the programme (to asses if individuals have integrated these behaviours into their lifestyle).

D. Active engagement of beneficiaries

M&E is not only worth for accountability. It is also a significant part of the learning process. Accountability, for both donors and, most important, beneficiaries is one of the humanitarian principles that an SHA should respect. So does beneficiaries' involvement. Very often M&E «is viewed as a burden and a mandatory part of receiving funding»⁵¹. However, M&E present

is also indispensable to acknowledge the limitations of our conclusions in certain circumstances⁴⁹.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ As SHA is based on the supposed social benefits of sport participation, M&E needs to measure the impact of such participation on the behaviours of participants. Coalter, 2006, *op. cit.* p. 155.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 40.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵¹ Krenichyn, Schaefer-McDaniel,Clark & Zeller-Berkman, *Where Are Young People in Youth Program Evaluation Research? Children, Youth and Environments (17) 2*, 2007, pp. 596-615, retrieved July 8, 2008 from http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/17 2/17 2/38 EvaluationResearch.pdf. p. 610.

a great opportunity to improve the process of behaviour change that the SHA programmes in seeking by let beneficiaries to take part and lead M&E work⁵². By doing so, we will be able to^{53 54}:

- Foster empowerment
- Enhance sustainability
- Increase the level of ownership of beneficiaries and therefore to enlarge their interest in the programme.
- Better understanding of the intervention
- Turn the current view of beneficiaries as passive actors into a view as contributor and managers of the event.
- To encourage one another to participate (role model) in the programme.
- Develop the ability to reflect on and analyze attitudes, belief and behaviours.

A SHA is based on the supposed social benefits of sport participation. It is through reflection and analysis of participant actions that sport can provide framework for achieving nonsporting goals. Rather than research only for outcomes, a participatory M&E approach provides the participants with another possibility of «experience transformation» (besides follow-up step in a sport activity), and easier integration of a new behaviour into lifestyle, avoiding relapses (maintenance)⁵⁵.

E. Role of the evaluator

This feature is strongly connected with the above characteristic. The main role of this person is not to evaluate the SHA programme but to help participants to evaluate their programme.

Thus, beneficiaries step into the role of evaluator and evaluator into the role of facilitator and counsellor⁵⁶.

2.6. Respect humanitarian principles

Historically, humanitarian action has been defined on the foundation of a number of principles, being the most significant humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence and universality⁵⁷. Humanity refers to prevent and alleviate human suffering. Impartiality endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress; neutrality⁵⁸ consists of not taking side in hostilities either military or ideologically; independence focuses on being autonomous and taking their own humanitarian decision without being influenced by external factors; and universality implies that any victim of a natural or man-made disaster should be given assistance without discrimination⁵⁹ ⁶⁰ ⁶¹.

Other organizations and authors have suggested other principles but they are not commonly accepted as humanitarian principles such as professional competence (good will is not enough), victim's consent, and testimony⁶².

There is still an assumption in many countries and by many people that humanitarian action is basically charity work and therefore anything that is done in the name of helping disaster victims is acceptable (IFRC website). Humanitarian action and, therefore, sport for humanitarian action can do harm if it is not employed in a proper way. When any kind of SHA programme is

⁵² Level of beneficiaries' participation vary from passive involvement (taking part in focus groups, interviews or questionnaires) to active involvement (formulate research questions, decide on methods to be used to explore answers to those questions, implement the methods, derive results and interpret and disseminate those results). *Ibid.*, p. 599.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Coalter, op. cit., p. 10).

 $^{^{55}}$ Based on Krenichyn, Schaefer-McDaniel, Clark, & Zeller-Berkman, op. cit.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 661.

⁵⁷ Abrisketa, J., «Accion humanitaria: Principios», in Perez de Armiño, Diccionario de la Accion Humanitaria y Cooperación al Desarrollo, Bilbao, Icaria Editorial, 2002, pp. 13-16, p. 13.

⁵⁸ Neutrality and impartiality are parallel principles. With both principles, humanitarian action seeks to distinguish form military or political

action. While impartiality implies action, neutrality refers to the abstention of declaration in favor or against any party involve in the hostility. Neutrality is what makes humanitarian action being impartial. *Ibid*, p. 14.

⁵⁹ It is worth noting that in the last decades (mainly after the Coldwar era) some of these principles has been questioned and revised such as neutrality, independence. However, it is not the aim of this article to debate on this issue.

⁶⁰ Spieker, H., «Mapping:International Committee of the Red Cross», Conference for the Intensive Programme of the Master in International Humanitarian Action, Bochum, Unpublished, 2007.

⁶¹ Abrisketa, op. cit.

⁶² Rey, F., & de Currea-Lugo, V., *El debate Humanitario*, Barcelona, Icaria Editorial, 199, chapter 3.

planned, it is important to question: «What effect will it have on victims' needs and their rights?»

In 1994, in order to set certain professional standards to guide a disaster response the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the most prominent humanitarian NGOs established the Code of Conduct for disaster relief, which has been signed for a great number of humanitarian NGOs.

Although the code of conduct is voluntary and self-enforced by each organisation, a sport for humanitarian action programme should take into account and respect the ten principles gathered in the Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, which are⁶³:

- 1. The Humanitarian imperative comes first.
- Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
- Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
- We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
- 5. We shall respect culture and custom.
- We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
- 7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
- Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
- We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
- In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.

Principle number two focuses on non-discrimination. Sport can be a means of discrimination indeed. Among the reasons for this discrimination are the next: a) great importance is given to child performance (talented and not talented); b) lack of know-how (for instance, not provision of sport for peo-

ple with disabilities because they do not know how to do it); deficient human and/or materials resources (this also includes the lack of sport infrastructures); d) economic situation of child family (not only because sport participation can be expensive —fee, uniform, transport, sport equipment, etc— but also because, in vulnerable communities, children very often have to support their family by working and do domestics jobs); e) cultural beliefs (for example regarding female participation). Whereas a well designed sport for humanitarian action can tackle the first three reasons and be part of the fourth one, the last reason becomes difficult by using solely an SHA programme.

They are very particular features of any sport for humanitarian action that not necessarily a sport for development programme has. Principle three and four are related to these characteristics. For instance, if the purpose of a sport programme is to reduce vulnerabilities but has as one of its specific objectives «to increase religious faith of participants», the programme may be seen as part of sport for development, but definitely it cannot be classified as sport for humanitarian action.

Regarding principle 5, human beings in all cultures (from prehistory times until now) have engaged in physical activity and have used human movement as part of their ritual life⁶⁴. There is no culture, tribes or society that have not used sport as part of their life. Thus means that sport is culturally accepted. However, it does not indicate that an SHA programme can use any sport activity, the sport activities must be chosen according to the context and peoples' interest and should promote indigenous sport activities.

An important point of a sport for humanitarian action programme is to involve beneficiaries, not only as participants, but in the management of the programme (principle 7). This aspect is in connection with the project long-term sustainability.

In order to achieve sustainability, very often sport programmes employ a delivery system by «cascading» skills. The idea is to train a group of selected individuals (lead facilitators and/or managers) that will train other group of people (facilitators), who in turn will train coaches, who are the

⁶³ IFRC, the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relie, retrieved July 4, 2008, from http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/

⁶⁴ Coakley, J., *Sport in Society. Issues and Controversies*, third edition, New York, MAC GrawHill, 1994, p. 63.

ones working directly with the target group. The advantage of building this structure is that the programme ensures that (a) community members are managing the programme (under the supervision of a NGO coordinator); (b) the number of individuals that the programme can targeted is higher⁶⁵ and (c) «generate strong ties between people who share very similar social circumstances and which are based on trust and reciprocity»⁶⁶. However this system has a great risk, which is associated with the principle of professional competence: the use of unqualified coaches in SHA programmes. We have mentioned that SHA is a low-cost tool. Whereas it is true that none or limited material resources are needed, the backbone of any SHA programme is its human resources, not in quantity but in quality. Very often the people involved in any kind of coaching in a sport programme are volunteers who are big fans of sport (in its restrictive definition) and place too much emphasis on performance rather than in the holistic development of the child⁶⁷. They often put their own interest first instead of the best interest of participants. Coaches' lack of knowledge increases also the probability of injuries, participants' burn out and sport dropout rates. The lacks of coaches' education develops into an inefficient pedagogical climate or supportive environment that, once again, put participants' physical, psychological and emotional development at risk.

An SHA intervention should take into account this possible risk and provide facilitators and coaches not only with sporting skills, but with knowledge regarding teaching styles (experimental learning), session planning, communication skills, dealing with groups and information about the non-sporting goals we intend to achieve amongst others aspect (Professional competence —good will is not enough).

Conclusion

For sport to become an instrument for humanitarian workers, it is indispensable to escape from the classic concepts of

sport and humanitarism. Sport cannot be perceived as a competitive physical activity. Instead, sport is *«a far-reaching inclu-sive concept»* 68, which embraces the physical, mental and social dimension of activities. At the same time, humanitarian action does not only pursue the aim to save lives and alleviate suffering. Other purposes of humanitarian action are to maintain human dignity, protect victims' fundamental rights and prevent and strengthen preparedness for future disasters.

The utility of sport in the humanitarian field is diverse. Sport is a powerful low cost and effective means to achieve a combination of several fundamental rights (health, education, development, leisure...); it can serve as an instrument of peace building (during resolution, reconciliation and reconstruction phase); it is also a tool to prevent vulnerabilities trough community empowerment and resilience enhancement; Sport is a curative method too. While sport cannot save lives or cure injuries (morbidity and mortality), it can help victims to recover from the social disruption and psychological costs produced by a disaster. Sport is also used as a diplomacy tool. For instance, cricket has been and continues to act as a form of multi-track diplomacy between Pakistan and India⁶⁹. Last but not least, sport is a great fund-raising tool and has a powerful ability to make people aware of humanitarian causes. One of the hundreds of example is the partnership between FC Barcelona and UNICEF. In addition to have UNICEF logo in F.C. Barcelona uniform, the team committed to give \$1.9 million dollars per year over five years to UNICEF⁷⁰.

This paper provides a basic framework to enable organisations to adopt and integrate a SHA intervention approach into their programmes. It offers to humanitarian aid workers (not familiar with this topic) basic but essential knowledge, ideas and suggestions that have to be taking into account when designing a sport programme. Concretely, this paper gave answer to Parkinson's questions: «What conditions are necessary for sport to have beneficial outcomes?»

It is not sport, but the people who are the motor of changes. Participation in sport activities is a necessary condition. Without

 $^{^{\}rm 65}$ If one person can handle a group of twenty participants, then twenty coaches can handle four hundred participants.

⁶⁶ Coalter, 2006, op. cit. p. 151.

⁶⁷ Coakley, 2003, op. cit. p. 133.

⁶⁸ SALTO-YOUTH, op. cit. p. 27.

⁶⁹ Crick, E. *Cricket and Indian National Consciousness*. New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2007.

⁷⁰ UNICEF website. (2007). FC Barcelona Wins Prestigious Sports Award for UNICEF Partnership. Retrieved June 24, 2008, from http://www. unicef.org/infobycountry/spain_39295.html

beneficiaries involvement there is not social changes and therefore a SHA programme need to seek community involvement and support. But this is not sufficient to release the potential of sport. The design of a programme should take into account the different stages through which people move when they decide to acquire anticipated positive behaviours. Participants first need to learn that the new behaviour will bring them positive outcomes (awareness). These positive outcomes will be the source of motivation (instead of external incentives). Then, participants need a number of skills and knowledge (capacity building), so they can implement the new behaviour (action). The process does not end here, the new behaviour need to be maintained (integration in social life). A SHA programme should design different activities for each stage.

«Sport participation involves a wide range of possible learning experiences»⁷¹, which guide us to different results. A SHA programme concentrates its attention on the social learning elements presented in all sport activities. But it is through reflection, analysis and assessment of participants' actions that sport can offer a structure for achieving non-sporting goals.

Without reflection, a sport programme may enhance the physical fitness of their participants, it may help participants to have a good time and get distract for the hardship of their lives, but it will not contribute to achieve humanitarian action goals. Monitoring and evaluation is a means to reflect and, therefore, an important part of the learning process; for that reason, participants should take an active role in monitoring and evaluation. In addition to that, in order to evaluate the impact created by our programme, a baseline survey cannot be forgotten.

Another relevant ingredient falls on facilitator's skills. They are the one to guide the process of change and to keep participants motivated. Unqualified coaches/facilitator can easily ruin a very effective SHA program design. It is worth to mention the role of the context or environment where our intervention is taking place. There are many external factors that lay outside the individuals and the programme control. Consequently an intervention working in isolation is not a guarantee of success. A

Although this paper aims to promote the use of sport as a humanitarian action tool, it should be stressed that sport is just one of many tools available to humanitarian aids workers. This paper also advocates for a responsible use of SHA. As Keim⁷² pointed out well:

«... we need to be cautious of making false claims for sport or raising expectations that cannot be met. On its own, sport cannot reverse poverty or prevent crime or violence, solve unemployment, stop corruption, and respect human rights».

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comprehensives and multi-agency approach is required in order to resolve humanitarian challenges.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 108.

⁷² Keim, M., «Sport as Opportunity for Development and Peace Building in South Africa», in Vanden Auweele, Malcolm, & Moulders, Sport and Development, Leuven, lannoocampus, 2006, pp. 97-106, p. 103.

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