

## ARTICLE



# Peace Building Through Sport? An Introduction to Sport for Development and Peace\*

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## Abstract

The use of sport to address a variety of social issues, a strategy referred to as Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), is becoming widely accepted, especially in regions affected by poverty, violence and conflict. Identifying a set of unique characteristics, a wide range of actors in the peace and development field, including the UN, international development agencies and non-governmental organizations, have endorsed sport as a significant social catalyst. This paper aims to: 1) introduce Sport for Development and Peace; 2) highlight ways in which sport may support peace building and conflict resolution processes; and 3) present current Sport for Development and Peace initiatives in Colombia.



## Keywords

Colombia, physical activity, Millennium Development Goals, sport and conflict resolution, sport for development and peace

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## INTRODUCTION

The role and impact of sports in society has been a subject of debate for centuries. For some observers, sport is a physical activity always associated with competition among nations or teams for the pride and glory of winning. The English writer and journalist George Orwell once defined sport as “war minus the shooting”. For Orwell (1994), the objective of competitive sports was defeating the opponent at any cost while humiliating them and their supporters. In his opinion: “serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence” (p. 322).

But just as sport has the capacity to awaken exaggerated nationalistic sentiments, intolerance and even vio-

lence, both in athletes and spectators, there is also a sector of society that supports the notion that sport can serve as a means to advance social development processes. The use of sport to bring about social change has been recently promoted by a variety of international actors, notably the UN, international development agencies, FIFA and the International Olympic Committee among others. Working together with non-governmental organizations, sport federations, and the private sector under a strategy referred to as Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), they have become supportive of the idea that sport is indeed valuable when addressing issues related to human justice and equality.

The aim of this paper, divided into five parts, is to bring to light the recent use of sport as peace building agent. The first part introduces the field of SDP. The second identifies some of the attributes of sport which SDP supporters claim

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facilitate peace and development work. The third tackles the issue of sport for conflict resolution. Drawing from existing conflict resolution models, this section aims to provide a preliminary analysis on the interplay between sport and peace building. The fourth part highlights current SDP initiatives in Colombia. Two projects in particular are briefly addressed: the multi-sectorial sport-for-peace project, Football and Peace Network (*Red Fútbol y Paz*) and the south-south cooperative, academic, grassroots project Goals for Peace (*Goles por la Paz*). The paper concludes with some remarks on SDP as a social strategy and area of research and elaborates on the opportunities and limitations of sport as a social catalyst

## 1. SPORT AS A CATALYST FOR PEACE: EARLY INITIATIVES

The idea of using sport to advance peace endeavors is not new. The first documented use of sport to mediate in times of conflict dates back to the 9th century BC in ancient Greece with the establishment of an Olympian Truce (*Ekecheiria*), intended to temporarily stop the war between the Peloponnesian city-states during the celebration of the Olympic Games. Spectators, athletes, artists and their families were able to travel to the Olympic Games and return to their places of origin in total safety (International Olympic Committee, 2009).

Another example of the conciliatory character of sport is the famous Christmas Truce of 1914 during World War I when German and English troops stopped hostilities to exchange gifts and play football (Woodhouse, 2009, p. 27). In doing so, the rival troops validated the potential of sport as an agent of transformation and change as a match of football provided temporary relief to combatants and a provisional cease-fire.

In more recent years, the use of football to tackle issues related to equality and social justice emerged as a response from different social sectors, notably grassroots, to instances of violence and intolerance induced by spectators – and in some cases by professional players themselves – both in and around football stadiums. This particular type of sport-associated hostility commonly referred to as “hooliganism”, dominated football venues in England in the 1970s and 80s, leading football to the worst crisis it has ever experienced. The Heysel disaster of 1985, in Belgium, resulted in the deaths of 96 football fans (Hughson and Spaaij, 2011, p. 283), due to a deadly combination of football violence and poor stadium maintenance. Following this, the Football Supporters

Association was established in the United Kingdom to educate ‘wild fans’ and encourage supporters to express their concerns with regards to football violence. Denmark replicated this campaign when a group of football enthusiasts founded a movement called the Rooligans or peaceful fans. Moreover, joining several European awareness-through-sport initiatives from grassroots organizations, in 1992 professional football clubs in Germany and Italy dedicated a game to protest against violence and racism in sport (Murray, 1996, p. 170).

Building on the success of early sport-for-peace campaigns to tackle a wide range of social issues at the local and regional level, several initiatives to promote sport as an agent of transformation were subsequently launched internationally. This in turn set in motion a sort of ‘cooperative global ethos’, gravitating around the new application of sport as a social catalyst and laying the foundations for a social intervention strategy and social movement known today as Sport for Development and Peace.

### 1.1. What is Sport for Development and Peace?

As a social intervention strategy, Sport for Development and Peace proposes the use of games, physical activity and sport to address explicit peace and development objectives including, most notably, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). While this approach aims at realizing the rights of all members of society to take part in sport and leisure activities (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2008) it has an important component of non-sport-based activities. These are to tackle a wide range of social issues including: gender equality; peace building and conflict resolution; social inclusion; crime and violence; racism; social inequality; health education. SDP projects are being carried out both in developed and developing nations, with a significant number of interventions taking place in regions with particularly high levels of violence, poverty and conflict.

As a policy sector (see Giulianotti, 2011) and a social movement (see Kidd, 2008), SDP has been operating since the 1990s, with activity intensifying in the last decade<sup>1</sup> (International Platform on Sport and Development, n.d.). To streamline efforts directed at promoting sport as a social catalyst, multi-sectorial alliances and partnerships involving key stakeholders in the worlds of peace, development and sport continue to grow worldwide.

As an emerging academic field, the study of sport as a development and peace instrument has been addressed by a variety of disciplines, most prominently international

1 P. Donelli (quoted in Giulianotti and Armstrong, 2011) estimates that by 2007 approximately 400 NGO's in the field of sport, development and peace were in operation and an average of 10 more NGO's were being created per month (379).



development, conflict and peace studies, sport studies and kinesiology, sociology and area studies. There is a growing body of academic literature in this incipient field and SDP has been enhanced by research, mainly in the form of case studies aimed at assessing the role of sport and its capacity to strengthen social development processes.

## 2. WHY SPORT?

As a cultural manifestation common to virtually every society, the international community has acknowledged the potential of sport and physical activity to support peace building efforts. The UNESCO, for example, has indicated that, to achieve the goals of peace and development, it is important to recognize the cultural dimensions of sport, which it considers needs more academic analysis (UNESCO, 2009, p. 8). Additionally, several agencies within the UN system (e.g. UNOSDP, UNDP, WHO, ILO, IOM) use sport as a component in their development and peace work (United Nations, n.d.). Beyond the global popularity of sport and its alleged capacity to break through cultural barriers, SDP advocates contend that sport possesses unique features that allow it to strengthen development and peace processes (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2008):

### a) Universality of sport

Sport, games and physical activity in general are present in virtually every society. The popularity of sport transcends political, national and ideological borders and it is enjoyed by spectators and participants alike (SDP International Working Group, 2008). Football for instance, the most popular game in the world, is estimated by FIFA to be played by 265 million people (FIFA, 2007), while other games such as cricket, basketball and baseball, attract the interest of millions of spectators and participants worldwide. The use of sport as an intervention strategy is supported by the belief that the popularity of sport provides a hook to bring multiple stakeholders and at-risk populations into community welfare programs.

### b) Ability of sport to connect people

One important attribute of sport is its capacity to connect peoples and communities in an extremely effective manner. When they are inclusive, these communities turn into important areas of social networking fostering a capacity to work in a cooperative manner (SDP International Working Group, 2008). The Open Fun Schools project is an example of the capacity of sport to encourage the development of social networks between former antagonistic communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since its inception in 1998, this

grassroots youth football program has brought together tens of thousands of children from once opposing communities to play football together (Gasser and Levinsen, 2004).

### c) Potential of sport to inspire and motivate

By shedding light on what people can do, sport inspires and motivates individuals. In addition, sport encourages self-esteem, physical and mental health and nurtures positive connections with others (SDP International Working Group, 2008). Sport can also serve as a 'classroom' where participants learn about social skills such as teamwork, leadership and cooperation, thus providing an ideal environment to foster healthy individual and collective development.

A four-year study was conducted to test the hypothesis that "sport contributes to personal development and well-being in disadvantaged children and young people", analyzing the impact of eight organizations in Africa and India employing sports in a variety of ways. The study concluded that: 1) sport programs had an impact on the self-esteem and perceived self-efficacy of participants, with the self-evaluation of the majority undergoing a transformation; 2) positive attitudes towards women's involvement in sport and education were improved across participating programs; 3) sport was an effective medium for giving young people information about HIV and other health-related issues; 4) physical training boosted participants' confidence both through meeting and addressing issues with peers and coaches as well as by developing leadership skills (Coalter, 2010).

### d) Capacity of sport to divert violent behavior

A study conducted in 2008 by the consulting firm Schwery asserts that the relation between sport and violence revolves around the idea that physical activity may be instrumental in preventing deviant and antisocial behavior and that sport can assist in the rehabilitation of offenders. The study also found that the delinquent behavior of young members of sports clubs was lower (Schwery Consulting, 2008). Furthermore, according to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDP programs implemented in the slums of Medellin, Colombia have resulted in a drop in criminal behavior while in Brazil, programs such as Segundo Tempo are expected to show children a way out of misery and violence (2005, p. 8).

### e) Capacity of sport to foster peace building

Although the relationship between sport and peace is not always evident, there have been several instances where sport has been instrumental in supporting formal processes of peace building and conflict resolution. According to Woodhouse (2010) "...there are many examples where different sports and sportspeople have explicitly worked in a



conflict-resolving manner and where sport has been seen as a bridge-building activity and an alternative to violence and destructive conflict” (p. 494). A particular example is the case of Sierra Leone during the civil war. A football festival in the Bo region was one of the few activities that could provide a sense of normality during the conflict. As reported by Van der Niet (2010) football had the power to literally stop the war, albeit only momentarily. The festival provided a “safe space” for conflicting sides to interact, with the occasional football matches held between the military, civilians and the fighting groups (p. 49). Further elaboration on the role of sport in peace building is offered by Giullianotti and Armstrong (2011), indicating that sport-based peacemaking facilitates reconciliation efforts in affected communities. Moreover, peace building through sport presents the military with a new way to create positive connections with civilian populations in conflict zones (p. 379).

### 3. SPORT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Sport for Development and Peace is a relatively new social intervention strategy and an emerging interdisciplinary research field. However, in spite of the growing body of SDP literature, the academic community has stressed the lack of research analyzing the interplay between sport and peace from a perspective of peace and conflict resolution studies. Although an important number of studies examining the role of SDP programs have been produced, Sugden and Haasner (2009), affirm that only a few interventions and studies are grounded in conflict resolution theories (p. 1).

The limited research addressing the use of sport for conflict resolution (Borsani 2009; Lea-Howarth, 2006), has made use of peace theories including Galtung’s 3 Rs (1998), Lederach’s web-approach to peace building (2005) and Schirch’s use of rituals (2005). Here I have mentioned only a few peace building and conflict resolution approaches from which future research can develop a more systematic interpretation of the use of sport as a social catalyst. With this in mind, I focus on Galtung’s 3Rs approach to peace building to illustrate some of the ways in which sport may support conflict resolution initiatives.

#### 3.1. Galtung’s 3Rs: reconstruction, reconciliation, resolution

For Galtung (1998), the holistic process of peace building includes 3 Rs or key factors: reconstruction of peoples and

places after violence, reconciliation of the parties in conflict and resolution of animosities (p. 8).

##### 3.1.1. Reconstruction

Galtung further divides reconstruction into four subcategories: rehabilitation, rebuilding, restructuration and reculturation (1998, p. 53-61). SDP programs can provide rehabilitation and healing through psycho-social programs. One example of this comes from Sri Lanka, where cricket, the country’s most popular game, is used to rehabilitate hundreds of child victims of the internal conflict through the Cricket for Change program (Cricket for Change, n.d.). Furthermore, FIFA has played a central role in rebuilding sports facilities in regions affected by conflict and violence. For instance, they promised funds to rebuild a football pitch in Gaza which had been bombed. In Afghanistan, the national stadium, the site of executions, was also repaired and reopened with the support of this organization (Lea-Howarth 2006, p. 16). In restructuration, sport-for-peace programs can facilitate the building of relationships and thereby social inclusion (Kuvalund, 2005). In reculturation, SDP programs can serve as hooks, getting people involved in sport and establishing sports clubs and leagues based on accepted cultural rules, so strengthening civil society and democratic processes. In several African countries, such as Sierra Leone, football tournaments have been established with different ethnic groups playing together as teams, to reduce inter-tribal conflict by fostering a sense of national identity as opposed to tribal rivalry (Lea-Howarth, 2006, p. 17).

##### 3.1.2. Reconciliation

This stage aims at (re)building positive relations between former enemies who were both victims and perpetrators. Sport can contribute to building a more positive environment by helping people to regain a sense of security and normality (Borsani, 2009, p. 11), thus, facilitating reconciliation between opposing parties. Høglund and Sundberg (2008) identify instances in which sport has contributed to reconciliation in South Africa<sup>2</sup> at three different levels:

###### a) Reconciliation at the national level through symbols

Sport provided a space to represent the idea of the country being a multicultural nation or ‘rainbow nation’. South Africa’s first Olympic appearance since the 1960’s, when international anti-apartheid protests led to its exclusion from the event, was at the 1992 Olympics. The Olympic team, with both black and white athletes, flew in an airplane with the country’s flag painted on it. This provided an opportu-

2 Refer to the work of Cora Burnett (2010) for further analysis of the SDP sector in South Africa.



nity to use sport as a way to portray the political and social shift of the nation.

b) Reconciliation through communal activities

A direct use of sport can be found in military demobilization and integration processes, rehabilitation of child soldiers and games of football in refugee camps. In addition, through football tournaments and competitions, people have a chance to interact with members of other communities. Sport constitutes an easy, low-cost opportunity for people to socialize and strengthen community ties.

c) Reconciliation through individual development

The use of sport for individual development rests on the idea that, in order to be at peace with society, one has to first be at peace with oneself. To achieve this, a number of SDP programs in the country use life skills training, gender empowerment and HIV awareness (p.807-814) seeking to create a positive impact on the personal development of participants.

### 3.1.3. Resolution

A potential contribution of sport to conflict resolution processes is that it provides a sub-systemic nucleus around which social networks can be formed and where members can be taught about resolving conflict. The organization Football for Peace (F4P)<sup>3</sup> with ongoing projects in Israel, Jordan and Northern Ireland, for example, has been using sport to encourage social contact across community boundaries while teaching participants about peaceful coexistence and resolution of conflicts (see Sugden, 2008). By using 'disagreements' that may arise among participants during sport activities, Football for Peace coaches have introduced the concept of 'teachable moments', a space to encourage children to learn how to solve disputes in a constructive way (Lea-Howarth, 2006, p. 13). Another example of the use of sport to foster peaceful resolution of conflicts comes from Colombia where the Football for Peace Methodology (*Metodología Fútbol por la Paz*) has been instrumental in creating opportunities for dialogue via sport, among at-risk youth in disadvantaged communities.

Other approaches to examine the validity of sport as a tool for social transformation and change include Lederach's (2005) web-approach to peace building which emphasizes the creation of strategic networks. These networks (web-making processes) are particularly relevant for NGOs. As they are middle level actors, they are strategically placed to get people together and promote dialogue (Sugden and Haasner, 2009, p. 2) and to bring community

needs as well as grassroots efforts to promote social change to the attention of regional and national authorities. Additionally, Schirch's use of rituals (2005) may provide a framework to assess the validity of sport as a peace building tool. This approach emphasizes the use of rituals to 'humanize' victims and aggressors who, through violence, have dehumanized others or been dehumanized. In this context, a ritual can take the form of physical activity or a sporting event.

## 4. SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE IN COLOMBIA

Despite the fact that sport has been used as a peace building strategy in Colombia for nearly two decades, academic research addressing SDP in the country is virtually non-existent. Studies based on peace building approaches tackling the potential of sport as a social catalyst are needed, especially in this crucial moment when the nation and the international community have turned their attention to two recent developments in the country involving, precisely, the worlds of sport and peace: Colombia's outstanding performance in the 2012 Olympics and, as a consequence, the growing national interest to strengthen public policy around sport, and the ongoing peace process in the nation.

In the following section I briefly introduce the SDP sector in Colombia and present two sport-for-peace initiatives, the multi-sectorial project Football and Peace Network (*Red Fútbol y Paz*) and the grassroots initiative Goals for Peace (*Goles por la Paz*). Although an assessment of these programs or a comprehensive account of the SDP field in Colombia is beyond the scope of this paper, the aim is to bring current sport-for-peace initiatives in the nation to the attention of the academic community, SDP decision-makers and anyone interested in SDP in the region.

The formalized use of football to tackle a variety of social issues in Colombia began in the mid-1990s in the streets of Medellín, then one of the world's most dangerous cities. Following the tragic assassination of Colombian defender Andres Escobar after scoring an own goal in the 1994 World Cup, football was beginning to be perceived by a large sector of football fans as a means to create more violence. A group of concerned football enthusiasts and social researchers, notably Jürgen Griesbeck and Alejandro Arenas, came to the conclusion that this should be prevented and that the game should be a vehicle to unite people and promote peace. Determined to create social transformation via sport at various levels, and capitalizing on the popularity of the game, they developed a methodology with a series of innovative rules to foster peaceful co-existence and dialogue among

3 Not to be mistaken with the Football for Peace Methodology from Colombia.



football spectators and players alike. It came to be known as the Football for Peace Methodology and, as highlighted by Arenas, it introduced a set of features that complemented the traditional game: 1) mixed-teams; 2) first goal to be scored by a female participant; 3) mediators instead of referees; 4) the players agree on a series of rules which have to be respected throughout the match; 5) an end-of-game evaluation of whether the rules were respected as well as appraising fair play, with both factors taken into consideration to determine the winner of the match (personal interview Alejandro Arenas, March 13, 2012). The success of this and subsequent initiatives employing football as a peace strategy inspired Jürgen Griesbeck to establish Streetfootballworld a few years later, a global platform for football-for-peace projects and a repository of information on SDP. Moreover, this methodology quickly spread throughout the country and was adopted by a number of NGOs implementing peace-through-sport programs.

The Colombian Government has also adapted the Football for Peace Methodology through the program Golombiao, El Juego de la Paz - the Peace Game. It is currently being implemented through the Presidential Program on Youth Affairs - *Colombia Joven* - in association with UNICEF and the German Agency for International Cooperation in 18 states throughout the country. *El Golombiao* has been acknowledged as a strategy to advance development plans at the municipal and state level (Colombia Joven, 2011). Furthermore, the administrative body for sport, recreation, physical activity and leisure, Coldeportes, has also recently begun to explore the capacity of sport as a social inclusion tool, notably through the program *Gestores del Deporte* - roughly translated as Sports Promoters. In 2012, it was carried out in marginalized and conflict-torn zones in Colombia where opportunities for recreation and education are extremely limited (Coldeportes, 2012).

A number of sport-for-peace initiatives are also being promoted across the country by international actors in the peace and development world. For instance, the Monaco-based organization Peace and Sport, in collaboration with local NGOs, utilizes sports such as badminton, baseball, gymnastics, chess, table tennis and ju-jitsu to advance peace work (Peace and sport, n.d.). Additionally, the Inter-American Development Bank has supported projects in the country to integrate young people, via sports, into programs aimed at strengthening citizen security and preventing violence (Inter-American Development Bank, n.d.).

#### 4.1. Football and Peace Network (Red Fútbol y Paz)

The Football and Peace Network, formed by 16 public and private organizations, initiated operations in 2010 to address, via sport, issues concerning the social reality in

Colombia, including forced recruitment, social exclusion, violence, poverty and inequality. The Network has the technical and logistical support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) the World Bank and the German Agency for International Cooperation. This multi-sectorial initiative currently benefits around 25,000 children and youths participating in programs implemented by members of the Network, all of which have adopted the Football for Peace Methodology. The Football and Peace Network was conceived within the framework of Expopaz, a peace fair held in October 2010 in Bogotá. It was a meeting point for public institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations, international agencies and public figures in the field of peace to share knowledge and generate proposals on building peace in Colombia (Red Fútbol y Paz, n.d.). Among the participating organizations were Colombianitos (Little Colombians), Fútbol con Corazón (Football with a Heart), Tiempo de Juego (Play Time), World Coach Colombia, and Con-texto Urbano, which had been implementing SDP programs in the country for years.

A UNDP representative elaborated on the nature of the Network Football and Peace: "One of the conclusions we drew from Expopaz, was the need to bring these and other organizations together under a common framework to work collectively through sports, issues concerning co-existence, peace and reconciliation in the nation" (personal interview, February 23, 2012). Since its inception in 2010, one of the most significant achievements of the Network has been the launching of the Solidarity World Cup - *El Mundialito Solidario* - held in July 2011. In this tournament, 120 children played during the under-20 Football World Cup celebrated in Colombia (Cercapaz, 2011). The Network Football and Peace is currently setting up a database of previous and ongoing projects, to provide a deeper understanding of the impact participating organizations have on communities across the country where interventions are being carried out.

#### 4.2. The Goals for Peace Project (Goles por la Paz)

The Goals for Peace Project is a mixed grassroots and academic initiative in the field of conflict transformation, community development and south-south cooperation via sport and is probably the first collaboration at the grassroots level between Colombia and the Philippines. Goals for Peace was first implemented by a group of sports enthusiasts and peace activists from both nations in 2009 in Bogotá, Colombia, followed by a project in the Negros Oriental region of the Philippines the same year. In Bogotá, the project was carried out in Ciudad Bolívar, the capital's largest locality and home to a considerable population of internally displaced people. Using the popularity of football, cooperative games and



artistic activities, Goals for Peace is aimed at empowering young people to initiate change, promote pro-active reform and develop a culture of peace in their communities. The basic components of the program are sports training and seminars on capability building along with activity-based modules in areas such as leadership, teamwork, conflict transformation and peace building (Cárdenas, 2012). Goals for Peace has become an international initiative through a series of partnerships in Europe and the Philippines, where a number of projects have been developed in collaboration with academic institutions and community organizations.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

### a) Sport for Development and Peace interventions

Sport's main contribution to peace building processes is its universality. Because of its cross-cultural nature, sport is a unique way of breaking through geographic and social barriers and therefore can be a major component of social interventions, especially those targeting children and youths. Moreover, can attract at-risk populations onto programs where they can be offered other social services. Team sports force participants to interact with each other, which can contribute to building relationships on and off the field. Furthermore, participants may use situations of conflict that naturally arise from these interactions, to find innovative ways to solve disagreements (e.g. football matches without referees as a way to encourage participants to negotiate the rules of the game as presented by the Football for Peace Methodology).

Sport can be fun, and positive values learned during games such as team cooperation, fair play and leadership can be replicated in daily life. To be successful, SDP interventions should take into consideration the specific cultural dynamics where programs take place and concentrate on the most suitable sport (e.g. cricket as a more popular sport than football in India or Pakistan; gender awareness and sensitivity in regions where this is a major issue, with mixed-teams not always being possible in some countries). Finally, monitoring and evaluation of activities should be mentioned in this section, as this is certainly one aspect of SDP programs that poses considerable challenges to the people implementing the program and to financiers. Reports should not be limited to narrating simple outputs but they should be means to rationally analyze and assess the impact of SDP interventions and the possible ways in which programs could be improved. Academic institutions may support this process by developing rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems in conjunction with NGOs and grassroots organizations.

### b) Cautions and limitations of the use of sport for peace building

Sport is commonly associated with competition and aggression and has, in many instances, led to violence on and off the field. Certain sports demand high levels of physical contact between players and that, added to the competitive nature of sport, can lead to physical aggression and even serious violence. Emphasis on values such as fair play and respect should be a major component of any sport activity whether professional or recreational. It is essential when sport is used as a strategy supporting peace building such as SDP interventions.

Although sport can address many of the factors included in conflict transformation processes, it is by no means a comprehensive and holistic peace building strategy (Lea-Howarth, 2006, p. 44) and should not be propagated as a panacea to cure the world's most pressing issues; sport alone will not create any significant social change. SDP interventions should be regarded as a component of a complex multidimensional process to attempt to bring about peace in affected communities. Lastly, an additional limitation of using sport for peace building is the fact that sports coaches may know little or nothing about peace building; conversely, peace builders (and researchers) are usually not trained in sport coaching, or may not be familiar with the particularities of a sport, impeding a greater analysis and understanding of the connection between sport and peace.

### c) Sport for Development and Peace as an emerging academic field

Academic research in the area of SDP is still in its infancy and much remains to be done. Therefore, as suggested by Giulianotti (2010), research has to go far beyond case studies, and produce more analytical work (p. 208). On a similar line of thought, Sugden and Haasner (2009) have stressed the need for more research in this field to construct and share a more robust body of knowledge, thereby providing a wider understanding of the role of sport as a social catalyst (p. 10). In relation to sport as a facilitator of peace and conflict transformation undertakings, it is appropriate to point out that most studies are not grounded in existing conflict resolution approaches, impeding a more in-depth evaluation of the claims attributed to sport, in particular, as an element of change and transformation.

In Colombia, there is a need for research grounded in peace building approaches that address the potential of sport as a transformative tool. A more concrete understanding of the role of sport and its opportunities and limitations as an agent of peace within Colombia's particularly complex environment will consequently enrich the emerging field of Sport for Development and Peace.



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