

BUILDING AND DEVELOPING PEACE THROUGH SPORTS ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to prove that through research especially in this field, the researchers has proven that sports activities can affect the construction and development of peace and tolerance between communities and within a society. Building social and cultural relations within a society can better be done through sports and sport activities because it creates a sense of identity in the competition in which they can treat each other with trust and friendship, which is unequivocally expressed in building relationships and building peace. Most of the programs with sports activity in focus have already evaluated the effectiveness of activities as objectives of the program for peace building and development, such projects should be built at the international level and by credible institutions which could influence the drafting of an international strategy with financial impact for its implementation in countries where peace must be developed.

Through sports activities based on the data conducted on this paper, prove that sport is indeed the main tool for building good interethnic relations and tolerance, however as a recommendation is that researchers need to conduct more studies of this nature because only then the idea that peacebuilding and development through sport can penetrate in the world.

Keywords: Sports Activities, Development, Building, Peace

Introduction

Sport without a doubt has a crucial role in society, not only in the development of physical activity and games but also incites the spirit of competition, support, pride and joy in case of victory while in contrary, in case of loss there is a feeling of sadness, in certain cases when a sport match is played between countries that can be counted like a fight but without shooting (Orwel,1944).

In modern society, sport has an important role and in many cases sport attracts greater public interest than the other fields such as politics, economics, etc. Sport has had different influences on the development of nations, cultures, and communities and as a result it became an integral part of their lives, a process in which athletes contributed in active way while spectators were passively involved.

Sport is not just a physical activity where you can show your motor skills, abilities, agility, strength or any other element, but it is a tool where people interact socially and are closely connected to society and the community. (Jarvie et al., 1994).

Apart from physical activity, sport can be promoted as an added value of healthy lifestyle, mental development and improvement of social skills in society and cultural values, but it also has positive impact in health such as:

- Educates and improves health;
- Promotes team competition and respect;
- Creates employment and business opportunities;
- Creates understanding, unity and tolerance in coexistence;
- Creates interethnic understanding and peace, etc.

The importance of the development of sport and the role that sport has in building interethnic peace and tolerance in the world have been taken up by many different organizations around the world promoting sport and doing research on its impact on society through sporting activities. The International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Football Federation (FIFA) and many other organizations have played a significant role in this regard. For this reason, also the Assembly of the United Nations decided to celebrate 6th of April as the “International Day of Sport for Development and Peace” implying that through sport we can promote health, well-being, tolerance, mutual understanding and peace. A joint commitment of sports organizations, sports federations and various non-governmental organizations support the mere idea that sport is important and crucial when addressing issues related to human tolerance and equality.

In order to achieve the goal that through sport people tried to build relations in society and in between communities it is not only documented in the last century, there were previous tentative even before that, those initiatives have existed since the time of ancient Greece with the establishment of an Olympic ceasefire (Ekecheiria), was aimed to temporarily stop the war between the city-states of the Peloponnese during the celebration of the Olympic Games and enabled athletes, spectators and their families to move freely in their countries of origin (IOC, 2009). We can also give another example of the conciliatory character during the First World War of 1914 where German and British troops stopped hostilities and exchange gifts and played football (Woodhouse, 2009).

All these arguments give us the right to say that sport is a powerful tool that builds interethnic relations, it unites people and builds friendships between countries and across their borders, in this regard is worth to mention the President of the International Olympic Committee Thomas Bach, he says that Olympic athletes show to the whole world that it is possible to compete with each other, living in peace together, especially in the world of uncertainty that we are living now the Olympic games are of a particular importance.

By analyzing all these case studies, it has been proven that sport is the main potential force for temporary change or transformation to tolerance even in the cases of ceasefire of hostilities. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to prove that through research especially in this field, the researchers must prove that sports activities can affect the construction and development of peace and tolerance between communities and within a society.

Methods

The aim of this research paper is to prove that particular study cases of human relations, development, construction and promotion of peace are better done through sports activities and this is the best way to stop interethnic conflicts, hatred and promote human tolerance.

Building relationships

Building social and cultural relations within a society can better be done through sports and sport activities because it creates a sense of identity in the competition in which they can treat each other with trust and friendship, which is unequivocally expressed in building relationships and building peace.

However, in some cases social, economic and interethnic relations will not give the intended results only through sport activities but nevertheless there have been cases in which sport has been important in formally supporting conflict resolution and peacebuilding Woodhouse (2010), in which the athletes have played a key role in promoting peace as a way of resolving conflicts offered to them as an alternative to a sporting activity as a bridge of building interethnic relations.

There is an example that must be noted in this regard, such as the civil war in Sierra Leone, in the region of Bo during a football match there was a sense of stability and for a certain period of time the conflict was not there, according to Vander Niet (2010) football had the power to end the war and build relationships. Such examples are also provided by the authors Giullianotti and Armstrong (2011) regarding the relations that were built through sport activities find that they can build peace in conflict-affected communities based on a positive link between the civilian population and the military in which through sports activities they can stop conflicts and build interethnic relations.

Programs created by different organizations can play a key role in facilitating the process of building relationships through sports programs by creating contact opportunities between communities in sports which then generates a social bond which helps them to build peace and stability.

Developing peace

The development of society and peacebuilding through sports activities play an important role in inter-ethnic relations by creating trust in each other, providing the basic needs of a population, strengthening civil society and establishing institutions with democratic and transparent governance, reducing poverty by building the necessary infrastructure, and social cohesion in order to break down barriers between politics and citizens.

By implementing initiatives that are designed for peace-building and development through sport can help marginalized people or groups gain sufficient self-confidence in order to eliminate personal or social barriers to children, young people, girls and women, and also people with disabilities. Such programs can integrate the communities and can help in this process such as:

services in education, health, employment opportunities for starting a business, promotion on social networks.

The case of Colombia is of a particular importance by the mere fact that specific programs used sport as a tool for peace development through a strategy created by UNICEF in this regard some countries advanced this program from local, municipal to state levels (Joven, 2011), in this line of logic it means that through sports activities, as a tool for social inclusion they have managed to penetrate into the devastated areas of Colombia. There are such examples all over the world where there are currently dozens of wars or conflicts in many different countries, conflicts take place for political, economic or even interethnic reasons, to stop violence and to build peace and to develop it, such examples prove that sport and sport activities are the most reliable tools in building and developing peace.

Most of the programs with sports activity in focus have already evaluated the effectiveness of activities as objectives of the program for peace building and development, such projects should be built at the international level and by credible institutions which could influence the drafting of an international strategy with financial impact for its implementation in countries where peace must be developed.

Conclusions

Based on the relationships that have been developed in building bridges between communities and achieving peace, the main contribution has been made by sports activities through the quality and joint involvement of one or more communities in sport activities. Sport includes an intercultural and interethnic extension where through it many obstacles and barriers are broken such as: geographical, social and economic barriers therefore it is one of the main components in building peace and tolerance, the main goal is to transmit this message to youth and children.

In particular cases collective sports have proven to be the most encouraging ways to solve problems, as well as some sports which arise naturally at certain moments such as football in many cases. However, sport as a key tool for sustainable development for peace is also defined in the 2030 Millennium Agenda by the United Nations, where the role of sport is defined in several key points which promote peace, tolerance and understanding by uniting people across borders, cultures and religions around the world that can be used to promote mutual social solidarity. Sporting values, mutual respect, include competencies and values such as teamwork, collaboration, fair play and goal setting. Sport can be used as a platform for the realization of human rights, for a good standard of living, social security, equal gender rights, economic progress.

Through sport we can promote social welfare, raise awareness for a more sustainable life, to this regard also sports programs can help young people they can provide support in refugee camps also for people with special needs, homeless individuals and can bring out people out of poverty through employment at sporting events.

This study at a certain extent is limited for the fact that peacebuilding through sports activities based on the data conducted for this paper, prove that sport is indeed the main tool for building good interethnic relations and tolerance, but also as a recommendation is that researchers need to conduct more studies of this nature because only then the idea that peacebuilding and development through sport can penetrate in the world.

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