YOUTH EMPOWERMENT & CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SPORTS:
The challenge of evaluating the success of youth & sports programs around the world

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<tr>
<td>CYE</td>
<td>Critical Youth Empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIFA</td>
<td>Fédération Internationale de Football Association (International Federation and Association of Football)</td>
</tr>
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<td>IOC</td>
<td>International Olympic Committee</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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ABSTRACT

In a world rife with conflict and violence, sports are one of the few transcultural activities that maintain a worldwide popularity and naturally bring people together as a team. Because of this inherent interest around the world the past decade has seen a significant escalation of grassroots sports for development and peace (SDP) programs and governmental funding to support them. These programs use sports as a way to empower young people and teach conflict management skills, while simultaneously engaging the community surrounding them. This paper will focus specifically on the following research question to address a challenge that has emerged in the field: How is success defined and measured by international sports and peace programs that empower youth?

First, this paper contextualizes the research question in the relevant fields of SDP, Conflict Transformation, Youth Development, and Monitoring and Evaluation. The benefits of SDP program will be aligned with Critical Youth Empowerment theory as well as conflict management skills valuable to youth. Finally, primary research will be presented including three unstructured interviews with Mercy Corps, The World Affairs Council of Oregon, and Partners of the Americas in order to compare and contrast how each international organization addresses the challenges of measuring success and impact. Conclusions of this research include the value of creative approaches and the need for specific goals and objectives. These conclusions and other information obtained will hopefully add to field literature and contribute various best practices and lessons learned that other organizations and practitioners can benefit from.

Key words: sports, SDP, youth, conflict transformation, monitoring & evaluation
“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope, where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.”

-Nelson Mandela
Introduction

In a world rife with conflict and violence, sports are one of the few transcultural activities that maintain a worldwide popularity and naturally bring people together as a team. Even in a post-apartheid South Africa where tensions were extremely high, Nelson Mandela used the Springbok professional rugby team, formerly a symbol of the white Afrikaners, to unite all South Africans (Wolff, 2011). Sport can serve as an instrument to provide children and adolescents (especially those directly affected by violence) access to pedagogically supervised programs in which not only the pleasure and enjoyment of exercise and games are conveyed but also humanitarian and social values (Schaub, 2006). The use of sports to advocate for social justice and human rights is not a new concept, but the recent increase over the last decade in sports programs that empower youth in an effort to transform various international conflicts suggest the new era of such a role.

Throughout my work at both the Youth Leadership Programs through World Learning and at the International Visitors Program of the World Affairs Council of Oregon, I noticed this emerging trend within the field of using sports as a tool to empower young people. I was even surprised to learn that for the past decade there has been a specific branch of the UN called the UNOSDP dedicated to this exact cause. Many of the organizations that work with youth and/or international development have a program that includes sports (Sport and Peace, Mercy Corps, UNICEF, Women Win, Right to Play, Peace Players Intl, to name a few). Even USAID and the State Department fund entire programs dedicated purely to utilizing the power of sports. In my research I have discovered that not only is there a strong argument for the connection of

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peacebuilding and sports in youth programs, but that there is a large gap in the organization and
evaluation of SDP programs. In 2005, Dr. Robert Henley of the Swiss Academy for
Development said “There is a compelling need for more research in the area of sport and
development, in order to validate that the psychological sport programs are truly being helpful
for children and how (Kvalsund, 2009)". According to Amy Farkas, a former sport-for-
development specialist with UNICEF, “It’s a lot easier to simply justify your program’s
existence than to do the hard work of justifying the impact of the intervention. That’s why all
sport-for-development programs need rigorous monitoring and evaluation” (as cited in Wolff,
2011). Even in his detailed analysis of the historical context of SDP, Richard Giulianotti wrote
“researchers have yet to move past case studies to produce more analytical and generalized work
(2010)”. Various literature reviews by the SDP International Working Group (IWG) field have
stated that further research in the area of sport for peace is needed to guide or shape
programming and at a USAID panel discussion on measuring the Impact of Sports on Youth
Development, one Senior Alliance Officer said, “our panelists offered perspectives that show not
only the impact of the work on the communities that they serve but also helped bridge the gap
between observed impact and evidence-based outcomes that continue to challenge this industry
(Doherty, 2011)”. The need for evaluation of SDP programs has been a well-documented topic
and this paper seeks to address this gap; the specific challenge of evaluation being the
methodology. What specific tools should be used for evaluation either short term or long term to
guide these programs? And how are these tools decided upon? It can vary greatly as program
objectives are very diverse, but building relationships and integrating values within the sport
should be the focus, not the sport itself (Rookwood, 2011).
This paper will focus specifically on the following research question: How is success defined and measured by international sports and peace programs that empower youth? First, the research question will be contextualized in the separate disciplines of Sports for Development and Peace (SDP), Conflict Transformation, Youth Development, and Monitoring & Evaluation. Then, after verifying the need for this research question within each of these fields this paper will align the benefits of SDP programs with the dimensions of the Critical Youth Empowerment Theory and necessary conflict management skills. Monitoring & Evaluation will be the last chapter of contextual literature analysis in order to supplement its application to the other three fields explored in the previous chapters. Finally, this paper will present the methodologies and findings of the primary information collected via three semi-structured interviews with Partners of the Americas, The World Affairs Council of Oregon, and Mercy Corps. Both a contextual background in relative literature and primary research via interviews will be conducted so as to gain relevant information and develop conclusions rooted in both theory and practice.

**Context**

**Chapter 1: SDP, Sports, and Play**

Before addressing the challenge of monitoring and evaluating sports programs it is necessary to first contextualize and define sports within international development. The UNOSDP describes sport as:

“first and foremost a fundamental right for all people. Sport is far more than a luxury or a form of entertainment. It is much more than winning medals and scoring. Access to and participation in sport and physical activity are human rights and are essential for individuals of all ages to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. And by ‘sport’ we mean all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being, and social interaction. These include play, recreation, organized, casual or competitive sport, and indigenous sports and/or games. Sport provides a forum to learn skills such as discipline, confidence, and
leadership, and it teaches core principles such as tolerance, cooperation, respect, and the value of effort (UNOSDP, 2014).”

Yet, there are many strong criticisms of sports being used for development and peace initiatives.

The use of modern sports has no doubt been a catalyst for violent conflicts. Such examples include the 100 hour war after a soccer match between Honduras and El Salvador in 1969, the rioting of a football match between Croatia and Serbia that foreshadowed the Yugoslavian war, and the increase of tensions in Northern Ireland through separate football clubs for Unionist-Protestant and Irish-Catholic communities (Giulianotti, 2010). The issue of hooliganism and extremist fans rivaling against opposing fans and players is a very real concern, as well. Furthermore, sports were an important tool used during European colonization to establish social order. Not only were the current standards of soccer, which were established in England, used to colonize in Asia and Africa, but baseball was also used in a similar neocolonial capacity in Latin America by the United States (Guttman, 1994 as cited in Giulianotti, 2010) and unfortunately in many ways this is still occurring. At SDP international conferences, delegates from the developing world complain about Westerners who parachute in with things that aren’t wanted nor needed (Wolff, 2011) and much of the current evaluation used shows signs of top-down Western-led exercises, which displays culturally insensitive traits whilst ignoring broader epistemological issues associated with programs like ensuring the gender and disability concerns are addressed (SDP IWG, 2006 as cited in Levermore, 2011).

But, all of these criticisms are adaptations and are not inherent to how the game itself is played. Basketball is still basketball if there are no screaming fans fighting in a local bar, but if players do not follow the rules and all of them foul out, the game ends and suddenly spectators have no one to cheer for. The socio-historical context should absolutely be included as part of SDP program design, but it simply means that a different sport that is appropriate to the local
community or different approach to SDP altogether should be explored. In Jerusalem, multiple
sports programs exist within the city some of which use soccer, some of which use basketball
(Wolff, 2011). If sports motivation can be used to propel conflict and division, then why not re-
direct the significance of sports and play, and centralize the argument on the essential skills and
characteristics needed to play the game: dedication, communication, analytical skills and
feedback, self-confidence, respect for team mates, aggression and determination without
violence, etc.? In spite of these critiques there are also many historical examples of sports teams
used as a method to achieve peace and cooperation. For example, the international boycott of
sporting with South Africa directly led to the apartheid movement, and the Olympic Truce
established in the 1920’s was reestablished in 1992 to ensure peace. The positive effect and
popularity of sports teams is further verified by an entire genre of historical fiction and
nonfiction films and books in American pop culture devoted to the motivational and inspirational
stories of teammates coming together to overcome adversity. Sports have always been a
metaphor for relations, which is why the guidance of sports programs is essential.

The issue of having such a broad definition of sports is that it creates the challenge of
practitioners “not tying into more established development literature, and conducting sufficient
research into the efficacy of SDP programs (Scrag, 2012)” A team that plays cricket is not the
same as a sports program that uses cricket to teach conflict management in order to achieve
community development. To effectively use sport as a peace building tool and control the impact
practitioners must know what they are doing. The implementation and how sport is being
preserved is the key not sport alone (Kvalsund, 2009). The history of colonialism and its
manipulation of sport means that SDP programs have that much more responsibility to respond
to the ethical and moral implications of the host community’s historical context. Over the last decade the UN has been at the forefront of modeling such responsibility.

In 2001, the United Nations specifically appointed a Secretary-General to lead the new UN Office of Sports for Development and Peace (UNOSDP, 2013). Consequently, the year 2005 was declared by the UN as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education and the SDP International Working Group (SDP IWG) was established to pursue action plans to advocate for policy changes towards the support of sports programs. The Secretary-General and the SDP IWG focus and advocate for the positive role of SDP and not only confirm that should sports programs be used as an effective tool to reach the UN’s 8 Millennium Development Goals, but advocate that the efficacy of these programs relies on articulating the purpose and focus of a given program.

The SDP IWG focuses on five different thematic areas: 1) Sport and Child & Youth Development 2) Sport and Gender 3) Sport and Peace 4) Sport and Persons with Disabilities 5) Sport and Health (UNOSDP, 2013). Sport for peace, the third thematic group under the UNOSDP, is often called the ‘slow child’ because it is a new field that meets progress in tiny steps. These thematic areas can be combined if appropriate, but can only be achieved through the flexibility of sports and a large, inclusive definition that allows for the use of any game or activity that can successfully teach participants the core objectives including the use of creative drills in practice. “It is clear, therefore, that although officially recognized soccer rules should be applied in the majority of sessions, there are occasions in which implementing drills and games where these rules are not applied can prove useful (Rookwood, 2011).” A variety of drills and aspects of the game can be adjusted in order to fit the needs of the context. For example, referees can be removed so that players can be encouraged to self-regulate as well as monitor their own
substitutions and provide limits so that equity is always present. The competitive element can be high if the goal is to distract from life and harness focus, self-worth, and determination, or it can be very low to provide as much inclusion as possible; public tournaments could be held so that community members could watch the children of their community play, and perhaps even participate in a variety of ways- be it selling concessions, or having an adult/family match for adults to be involved directly. It depends on the philosophy of the program which is why the flexibility of sports will only reach its optimum level if the sports program has a clear understanding of its goals and objectives on a macro and micro scale. A drill with the objective of improving communication among players will be different than a drill to practice strategy and analyzing the game while playing it; a program in a post-war conflict seeking to bring conflicting communities together will have different objectives than a program that faces a high unemployment rate leading to young people joining gangs and street violence.

Although sports can be adapted to fit objectives, it can still be challenging to measure the impact and progress of the program. “Various nongovernmental organization officials have also commented on the difficulty of persuading most potential donors that the efficacy of projects is hard to measure reliably. Funding is more secure when direct personal relations are cemented between individual donors and SDP officials (Giulianotti, 2010).” With the UNOSDP and SDP IWG working to build relationships and partnerships with governments and corporations and advocate for the efficacy of SDP programs there is significant progress being made. Today the field known generally as Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) attracts growing support from foundations and corporations, while governments and international agencies are eager to serve as partners to groups on the ground. As the effectiveness of programs is more precisely measured, SDP’s value as a tool for good is becoming more widely acknowledged (Wolff, 2011). However,
the obstacle of satisfying funding requirements of individual grants is still an obstacle for many organizations because impact is experienced differently across programs. “It is important to note that empowering processes occur at multiple levels (individual, organizations, community) and each level will have related outcomes. This is complicated by the fact that empowerment is not experienced in the same way by individuals, organizations, and communities. Therefore, the development of a global measure of empowerment is not an appropriate goal (Zimmerman, 2000 as cited in Jennings, 2006).” The question is if empowerment cannot quantitatively be measured then how do organizations prove the efficacy and success of their programs so that funding and support will continue? For this reason, information has been collected from current existing literature and directly from current practitioners in how funding requirements and balanced with the benefits of SDP programs.

The table below summarizes the ten most important benefits of SDP programs according to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Conflict Prevention and Transformation Division (Schaub, 2006) each of which has been supported with field literature. These top ten benefits include: improvement of general well-being (intrinsic value of sports); activity and distraction; experiencing self-esteem through the furthering of skills and capabilities; exemplary training for reassurance and reconciliation in conflict situations; exemplary training for the right dosage of aggressiveness; the feedback culture of sports strengthens the ability to communicate; experience of belonging and of identity within the group; sport also mobilizes spectators, the neighborhood and the village community; sport as a means for increasing awareness, for disseminating information and for maintaining values; sport as a means of communication that goes beyond the boundaries of language, gender and social class. These benefits have all been previously referenced in this chapter and while the list is certainly not
exhaustive, the verification of this list begins to connect SDP programs into the field of Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation by exposing the greater themes and significance.

Table 1: Field Literature supporting the Most Important Benefits of SDP

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<th>Most Important Benefits</th>
<th>Literature Support</th>
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<td>1. Improvement of general well-being (intrinsic value of sports)</td>
<td>“Sport and games integrates an important part of the human being, which often gets forgotten in peace building: the body and its emotions. Sustainable conflict transformation means that you address also the participants’ feelings (Kvalsund, 2009).”</td>
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<td>2. Activity and distraction</td>
<td>“Sport—and particularly action sports (e.g. surfing, skateboarding, mountain biking, climbing)—may seem trivial pursuits in the wake of a natural disaster. However, in the weeks and months following a natural disaster, as individuals and communities attempt to re-establish familiar lifestyles and routines, sport and physical activity can play an important role in individual recovery and community resilience… Participation also enables some to regain a sense of normalcy (sportanddev.org, 2014).”</td>
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<td>3. Experiencing self-esteem through the furthering of skills and capabilities</td>
<td>“Set high expectations, but also show compassion, creativity, and patience (Shenk, 2010).”</td>
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<td>4. Exemplary training for reassurance and reconciliation in conflict situations</td>
<td>“Sport and games offer the space for joy, fun, creativity, and happiness, but also for rage, sadness and frustration. The latter emotions can be worked on by the coach (if necessary) and be transformed (Kvalsund, 2009).”</td>
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<td>“The regulatory component [of soccer] is a useful method of disciplining players, as the requirement to adjust to rules in certain contexts can positively impact the likelihood of players behaving appropriately in social settings (Rookwood, 2008)”.</td>
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<td>5. Exemplary training for the right dosage of aggressiveness</td>
<td>“‘Conflict prevention’, preventing conflicts, is meaningless. But ‘violence prevention’, preventing violence, is extremely meaningful and beneficial (Galtung, 2004).”</td>
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<td>6. The feedback culture of sports strengthens the ability to communicate</td>
<td>“The feedback in sports is usually immediate and visible—does the ball go into the basket?—so...”</td>
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that the athlete can change or repeat what she's doing and figure out how to get better (sportfordev.org).” Reflecting on individual skills and the team’s skills teaches youth to communicate and analyze.

7. Experience of belonging and of identity within the group

“When societies are more complex, when individuals have multiple avenues for meeting needs for inclusion and distinctiveness, intergroup comparisons along any particular division are likely to be less competitive or critical to member identities. Under those conditions, the positive benefits of distinctive in-group identities may be attained without the costs of intergroup hostility and conflict (Ashmore et al., 2001).”

8. Sport also mobilizes spectators, the neighborhood and the village community

“Healing requires proximity that touches the web of community life, which includes both the recent events and the lived histories of the communities (Lederarch, 2005).”

9. Sport as a means for increasing awareness, for disseminating information and for maintaining values

“Although it is often discussed in a negative manner, hardship can be an important procedure one is required to go through in order to facilitate image reconstruction. During the F4P project, coaches often tried to cause a conflict situation during coaching sessions so that it could utilized as a “teachable moment” to help the participants learn about positive means of conflict resolution while in a safe and controlled environment (Rookwood, 2008).”

10. Sport as a means of communication that goes beyond the boundaries of language, gender and social class

“Play may be used as a form and forum for human interaction to enhance the joy that is experienced universally- when a truly human connection is made among and between individuals and groups (Yalowitz, 1995).”

The quotes used in the right column to support each of the ten benefits stem from experts across their respective fields in SDP, Youth Development, and Conflict Transformation and have been added to further authenticate these benefits. Each of these authors have contributed works that will help contextual SDP programs within Youth Development and Conflict Transformation in the subsequent chapters so that primary research can specifically focus on the challenge of evaluating programs with applicable objectives. By creating Table 1 to supplement the original
list created by the SDC’s Conflict Prevention and Transformation Division SDP programs can begin to be contextualized and depicted as a valuable role with Conflict Transformation.

Chapter 2: Sports and Conflict Transformation

Significant contributions have been made in aligning the SDP field with peacebuilding and conflict transformation. In Lea-Howarth’s dissertation on Sport and Conflict (2006) he compared the contribution of sports programs for peace to the theoretical frameworks of John Paul Lederarch and Johan Galtung with a specific focus on the areas of building social networks, addressing cultural violence, and the 3R’s of Resolution, Reconciliation, and Reconstruction. He concluded that while sports and peace programs are not a panacea for a holistic conflict transformation, they are very valuable in these specific areas and should be utilized with contextual understanding and creativity. Mercy Corps, a leading international organization in youth in conflict, has also found that sports provide a strong incentive for youth to participate in conflict management trainings. “Youth in Liberia were much more likely to remember lessons they learned through sports and were much more likely to finish the program if there was a sports component (Mercy Corps Best Practices, 2011).” This natural buy-in of both young participants and the greater community is one of the strongest arguments for why sports and peace can successfully work hand in hand. Soccer, specifically, “is simple, relatively cheap and easy to organize and manage, with minimal problematic cultural variations apparent. Soccer serves as a team sport, which encourages human contact, engagement, and bonding, which are important in order to avoid hatred and violence (Rookwood, 2011)”. People from conflicting groups are often segregated from one another, having few relationships across conflict lines. In situations where youth were born into conflicts, they may never have met someone from the opposing group(s). Additionally, the majority of their information about others comes through
propaganda rather than personal experience (Mercy Corps Best Practices, 2011). Stereotypes can be broken through repeated interactions of mixed sports teams with mentor and adult supervision allowing an opportunity to build relationships. Furthermore, there is often a certain awkward and distrustful tension between parties that have never or rarely interacted. By focusing on the instructions of playing a sport or drill rather than putting pressure directly on the interactions themselves, teambuilding will naturally develop and the experiences will bond them as they achieve success and failures together. Suffice it to say, there is a presence of extreme popularity in sports for both spectators and players in almost every culture around the world. It is in this strategic role within global civil society that sports can be used as one tool in a holistic approach to teach the next generation about conflict transformation and peacebuilding SDP programs are using sports as a socio-cultural tool to promote reconciliation, begin teaching conflict prevention, while simultaneously promoting health issues, gender equality, education, address economic issues, and counter racism, stereotypes and intolerance (Giulianotti, 2010). Effective coaching in team sports can simultaneously address interpersonal and community relationships through teambuilding activities and drills, while also begin teaching new conflict management and prevention material to redefine what it means to work together and achieve common goals so long as the program is clear on their objectives and goals within the community.

Within Conflict Transformation the role of relationship building and interdependence is critical. After all, the basic definition of a conflict, according to Johan Galtung, is an incompatibility of goals pursued by two or more parties (2004), and the pursuit of those incompatible goals forces a competing relationship between the parties. But what happens when these multiple parties are literally put on the same team working towards a shared goal that is separate from the roots of the original conflict? Humans are social creatures by nature and
having a safe environment where people can interact is half the battle. “While we tend to think of achievement as an individual phenomenon, no human is an island. At its essence, humanity is a social and competitive enterprise. We learn from one another, share from one another, and constantly compare and compete with one another for affection, accomplishment, and resources (Shenk, 2010).” In South Africa, there is the concept of Ubuntu: I am because we are. “Today sporting Ubuntu extends from the street kid in Rio who, thanks to boxing, is transformed from avenging tough into potential Olympian; to the African AIDS orphan who, thanks to soccer, has a better chance of living long enough to raise children of her own; to the Arab girl in West Jerusalem who, thanks to basketball, feels bound to the fortunes of a Jewish Israeli player in the NBA (Wolff, 2011).” Sport by its very nature brings people together from all walks of life and connects them together. If any team wants to win they must come together as a group with individual strengths, mutual respect, and communication to score a common goal which is a perfect metaphor to support and develop a culture of peace that supports youth empowerment even off the field.

Chapter 3: SDP & Youth Development

Today over half of the world’s population of 7 billion is under the age of 30 and in many developing areas struggling with conflict (such as Nigeria, Palestine, and Afghanistan) more than sixty percent of the population in under the age of 25 (Nakana et al., 2013). There are more young people in the world than ever before and they often do not have many constructive avenues to influence the environment around them. Participation in a sports program can help to highlight democracy and show how to incorporate multiple opinions into political policy and in a sports context (Mercy Corps Best Practices, 2011). The sooner young people are empowered to
fix the critical issues facing the world the sooner solutions will be developed instead of violence and apathy.

Through a participatory research study, Jennings et al (2006) determined that there are six key dimensions for critical youth empowerment and that “it is important to note the interrelated, dynamic nature of the six dimensions of CYE”. These key dimensions include a safe environment, meaningful participation, equitable power-sharing with adults, critical reflection, participation in sociopolitical processes, and empowerment on both an individual and community level. These dimensions can be directly applied to any sports program for development and peace.

1. **Welcoming and safe environment.** In sports programs, in youth development, and in life it is inevitably that people will make mistakes. Learning takes place when one learns the lessons of their mistakes, but this can only happen if an environment is created where chances can be taken and mistakes are processed through rather than internalized. Daniel Yalowitz describes his guidelines for developing a welcoming and safe environment as The Law of the Seven C’s of Play: caring (thoughtful), control (defend the rules & players), creative (vulnerability), connected (bonded/interdependent), cooperative (use of sportsmanship), collaborative (use of teamwork), and community (connecting families and community members to the program as well) (1995). This is arguably the most important part of developing any youth program or sports program. Participants must feel safe and respected in order for any teaching and relationship building to take place.

Another critical element for the success of sports programs is inclusion of everyone in the community. This can prove difficult because one of the limitations of sports programs is that not everyone likes sports. “The Western phenomenon known as “choosing sides” occurred when
most of us as children experienced our first hurts and humiliations around being the last and penultimate person chosen to one team or another by ‘bigger and better’ team captains (Yalowitz, 1995).” However, creating a safe environment of respect and inclusion and even deemphasizing the competitive nature can seek to recruit more youth in participating that may otherwise have opted out. Even if there are youth that still chose not to participate, the doors should always remain not just open, but welcoming should they change their mind. Today, more and more steps are being taken to add more inclusion to sports as a whole. “In March 2012, the International Football Association Board (IFAB) decided to allow women to wear safe headscarves in FIFA-regulated matches and competitions. In the same month the International Valley Federation (FIVB) also changed their dress code rule for beach volley players. Players can now wear shorts of maximum length 3cm above the knee with sleeved or sleeveless tops or a full body suit (UNOSDP, 2013).” This is a great example of how a welcoming and safe sports environment can be created by including cultural sensitivity.

2. Meaningful participation and engagement. Similar to the idea of inclusion, a program is only as successful as its willing participants. Engagement in every activity, practice, and game has to be meaningful and genuine. Authentic participation is a representation of the commitment a participant has made to their team and the program. Therefore, in a team sport where players are interdependent with their teammates it is important to ensure that everyone is fully participating so that their efforts are making the team stronger. “One way to understand cycles of violence and protracted conflict is to visualize them as a narrative broken (Lederarch, 2005)”. When players meaningfully contribute to their team they are continuing their narrative and writing their story, but it takes effort and thought to get the pen to move. Teams write their stories together from different perspectives and if a few players refuse to fully engage it can
unravel the program and make other participants hold back as well. The narrative each
participant brings to the first day of the program and to every practice must be respected and
taken in account by developing a safe environment, but then it must be built upon by gently
pushing their comfort zone and continuing that narrative.

3. Equitable power-sharing between youth and adults. This third dimension can often
be culturally sensitive, but beneficial and adaptable none the less. “Inclusion of youth in project
design and implementation provides youth with the self-esteem, connection to peers and
communities, and a positive self-identity, all of which reduce vulnerability to joining violent
movement. The most successful youth programs with the guidance and support of adult mentors
(Mercy Corps Best Practices, 2011).” This does not imply that youth should be in charge of the
programs or be making administrative decisions. The emphasis here is on power-sharing and
modeling a community of diverse opinions. Creating leadership positions where players and
participants can state their wants and needs is a critical part of teaching them to do that exact
process in the real world. One example is the use of team captains as team representatives.
Certain decisions can be made democratically as a team, what to do for the last ten minutes of
practice, for example, and leadership positions can be built in as well, such as captains talking to
a referee on the field about a debatable call or participating in the coin toss. Adults must be
willing to share decision making power in order to truly practice what they preach and prepare
these young people for active participation and decision making in the future.

4. Critical reflection of interpersonal and sociopolitical processes. As previously
stated, it is crucial to reach participants of a sports program in terms of their own lived
experiences because every day they enter the program with unique skills, experiences and
knowledge. “Critical pedagogies propose that it is important to assess each student’s historicity
and build upon the wonderful backgrounds, legacies, skills, and knowledge students bring with them (Souto-Manning, 2010).” The only way for connections to be drawn between skills learned in a curriculum and know-how participants already have is via critical reflection, not only on relevancies to their own knowledge and experiences, but reflection on greater sociopolitical processes, as well. For example, a player may quickly realize that the environment they practice basketball in is inclusive and supportive, but the political arena that makes important decisions that affect society at large is often quite the opposite. Is this how it should be? Is this how it is done elsewhere? Critical reflection will lead to questions and more learning as they answer their own questions.

5. Participation in sociopolitical processes to affect change. In any conflict, a person or group of people who feel that their basic needs are not being respected and understood will find a way to make their voice heard and it is the same for young people. “Youth who do not feel represented or supported by any political party are two- to three-times more likely to join violent movements, voluntarily or involuntarily (Mercy Corps Best Practices, 2011).” Critical reflection of sociopolitical processes is important, but the next step is to engage young people and teach them to participate so that change and conflicts can be managed before they lead to violence. Giulianotti (2010) argues that “agencies running peacemaking SDP projects must engage more consistently with new social movements and relatively radical governments and community-based organizations, particularly Global South institutions based in conflict or post-conflict zones”. Many programs that provide youth programs fall short in reducing violence because they neglect other factors that drive youth towards violence such as unemployment (Mercy Corps Best Practices, 2011). SDP programs and critical youth empowerment must directly connect learnings to everyday life through experiential participation in the decisions that affect young
people. One potential solution could be developing a participatory curriculum with a sports component that empowers young people to address current issues they face in their community and to learn and join those political processes. Many sports programs, such as the A Ganar! program at Partners of the Americas, often couple sports with job training or an educational curriculum. Grassroots Soccer, for example, uses activities with soccer balls to explain HIV/AIDS and the consequences of having many sexual partners (Wolff, 2011) “The impetus that drives restorative approaches is not one that awaits the policy and decision from the highest level, nor assumes that its particular action provides a comprehensive response to system wide problems. Rather these efforts paint a different canvas of social change, which depends on the practice of accessibility, reconnecting people in actual relationships, and local responsibility (Lederarch, 2005)”.

If young people are being taught they can make a difference then they must be taught how exactly to actively participate and be part of the change they wish to see.

6. Integrated individual and community level empowerment. One of the greatest benefits of sports is the motivation and enthusiasm shared by not just players and participants, but by spectators and families as well. There is a reason that college and high school sports are just as popular as professional sports. Fans feel a strong relationship and connection to the players and experience failures and losses with these players as they watch; they are not distanced by the pedestal of a professional and elite standing. As young people learn and transform, spectators and fans will too. Families of players have the potential to positively impact more people in the community that may not have otherwise been supportive or interested. “If these families and communities are fully aware of potential activities and see them as important and safe and not intended to disrupt social structures, then young people will be much more able to participate and fully embrace the proposed objectives. Furthermore, endorsement of
youth activities by the community enhances respect for and self-esteem of young people. These factors will lead to greater sustainability for the projects in the long run (Mercy Corps Best Practices, 2011).” Their experiences and involvement will be different than the players, but their involvement can lead to empowerment on various levels.

This is why SDP efforts are illegitimate unless dictated and planned by locals rather than international groups (Schrag, 2012). The community engagement is not only ethically necessary to stay accountable to beneficiaries of the program; the lack of engagement will undermine the future of the program. Much of the violence in the world today is exacerbated by heightened social identities that define themselves as ‘us versus them’ (Ashmore et al., 2001). Sports programs that are not well thought out and contextualized in the local community can contribute to the conflict, rather than transform it. However, by creating new social identities as valued members of a sport they enjoy, participants can begin to expand the circumstances of the conflict and therefore become empowered to redefine their role in the community.

With these six dimensions for critical youth empowerment, an additional conceptual theory according to Schell-Faucon (2001) outlines the following as the personal, social, conflict management skills that should be taught to youth.

- Self-esteem
- Tolerance of frustration and ambiguity
- Self-awareness, awareness of others and empathy
- Communication and interaction skills
- Awareness of personal and cultural attitudes to conflict behaviors in conflict situations
- Ability to analyze and evaluate conflict
- Practical skills to manage and overcome conflicts

Schell-Faucon argues that youth and education work cuts across various disciplines and should fall into all fields of activity relevant to conflict transformation (2001). A similar argument is also made in the SDP field. “In the sports for peace arena, its researchers and advocates may not
even be aware of other knowledge bases (Schrag, 2012)”. Clearly, there is a need to strengthen the intersection of conflict transformation, youth empowerment and SDP.

The following table shows that when the Critical Youth Empowerment theory, the benefits of SDP according to the SDC used in Table 1, and Schell-Faucon’s basic conflict management skills are put side by side there is an incredible amount of overlap and similarity. Each color block corresponds to the general themes that are present and necessary across all three disciplines. The light blue signifies general safety and acceptance, dark blue signifies self-esteem, pink is communication & collaboration skills, orange is critical reflection & awareness, purple is individual and community connections, and brown is specific conflict management skills. There are obviously several squares that can be placed in more than one category; for example, in the Personal, Social and Conflict Management skills column “self-awareness, awareness of others and empathy” can have multiple themes of critical awareness & reflection, and individual & community connections. Like the 6 dimensions of CYE, there is an interrelated and dynamic relationship between these themes which goes to show that not only are these fields very much related in both theory and practice, but that SDP programs hold the potential to critically empower and transform conflict by purposefully incorporating these skills and dimensions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important Benefits of SDP (SDC)</th>
<th>6 Dimensions of CYE (Jennings et al.)</th>
<th>Personal, Social, Conflict Management Skills (Schell-Faucon)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Improvement of general well-being (intrinsic value of sports)</td>
<td>1. Welcoming and Safe Environment</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Activity and distraction</td>
<td>2. Meaningful participation and engagement</td>
<td>Tolerance of frustration and ambiguity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Experiencing self-esteem through the furthering of skills and capabilities</td>
<td>3. Equitable power-sharing between youth and adults</td>
<td>Self-awareness, awareness of others and empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Exemplary training for reassurance and reconciliation in conflict situations</td>
<td>4. Critical reflection of interpersonal and sociopolitical processes</td>
<td>Communication and interaction skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Exemplary training for the right dosage of aggressiveness</td>
<td>5. Participation in sociopolitical processes to affect change</td>
<td>Awareness of personal and cultural attitudes to conflict behaviors in conflict situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The feedback culture of sports strengthens the ability to communicate</td>
<td>6. Integrated individual and community level empowerment</td>
<td>Ability to analyze and evaluate conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Experience of belonging and of identity within the group</td>
<td></td>
<td>Practical skills to manage and overcome conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Sport also mobilizes spectators, the neighborhood and the village community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Sport as a means for increasing awareness, for disseminating information and for maintaining values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sport as a means of communication that goes beyond the boundaries of language, gender and social class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The overarching themes highlighted in Table 2 expand on Table 1 concerning the benefits of SDP across the fields of SDP, Youth Development and Conflict Transformation. In Table 2 the potential role of sports and peace programs is supported by providing connecting themes and relevance across all three of these theories (and by extension their respective fields of study); but as always, execution and specific circumstances of a program are critical to evaluate. Table 2 also shows how many different directions and objectives a sports program can have, as well as the many adaptations that can be made. Any one of these themes could be the goal of a sports program, just as the SDP IWG separates into their five different thematic areas: 1) Sport and Child & Youth Development 2) Sport and Gender 3) Sport and Peace 4) Sport and Persons with Disabilities 5) Sport and Health (UNOSDP, 2013). Since SDP programs are relevant to multiple fields of study, there are many options and aspects to consider during their design and implementation. In order to discover how success is defined and measured these themes need to be contextualized within the field of Monitoring and Evaluation of international development programs and more specifically for sports and peace programs.

Chapter 4: Monitoring & Evaluation

Now that context has been developed in SDP programming, Conflict Transformation, and Youth Development the challenge of monitoring and evaluating these programs can be fully introduced. First, a general vocabulary and understanding must be developed within the field of M&E after which limitations and creative approaches will be presented.

The OECD’s definition of monitoring is data collection throughout the life of the project to track the specific objectives and activities taking place to see if they are going as planned (2002). Typically, there is no judgment or value system placed on assessments and monitoring,
rather the purpose is to gather information about current activities that can potentially contribute to an evaluation that will assess the implication at a later time. Monitoring is conducted internally by field staff and is meant to be helpful in successful management rather than a burden, although it is not always perceived this way.

The definition of evaluation is to determine the project’s worth or significance. There are three main forms of evaluation: a formative evaluation that focuses on improved performance during implementation, a summative that focuses on consequences after a program, and a prospective or ex-ante that measures the value of the future of the project to determine its validity before it is implemented (Athukorala, 2013). The standards for any evaluation include relevance, effectiveness, efficacy, impact (both short term and long term), and sustainability. Organizations are held accountable to these standards primarily by funders who often will conduct their own evaluation process, or at least define the specific standards by which the project will be measured in order to continue funding the project. Evaluations can be conducted periodically, pre-implementation, or post.

There are several general approaches to program evaluation including; logical, participatory, and critical. Logical frameworks, or logframes, are often criticized as being a top down approach that are much too rigorous to account for all relevant factors, such as the reflection of satisfactory interpersonal skills of staff which are vital to these programs. Logical frameworks focus on outputs and although they hold decision makers of the project accountable to questions, assumptions, and risks, it is often difficult to adapt a logframe as needs for changes arise throughout the life of the program (Athukorala, 2013). Participatory methodology collects data based on the active participation of beneficiaries that are directly or indirectly impacted by the program in order to develop a more holistic and qualitative understanding of the project. An
example is the Rapid Appraisal Method (RAMs) which combines informal discussions, semi-structured and open interviews, focus groups and direct observation (OCDE, 2002; Levermore, 2011). Criticisms of this method include the inevitable subjectivity of both the interviewer and the interviewee, the lack of random sampling, and even the continued use of a top-down approach since evaluators are still in control of the process rather than the impactees. This is why all M&E plans should include a front-end analysis prior to choosing any method of evaluation. A front-end analysis includes assessing the context, developing project objectives and activities, creating a stakeholder analysis, a log frame analysis, a monitoring plan, and developing a project M&E plan as a managerial tool all of which are prior to project implementation (Athukorala 2013). Essentially, it means gathering as much data as absolutely possibly before any decisions or plans are implemented, the comprehensive nature of which is frequently affected by the resource limitation of many organizations.

With these obstacles and criticisms of the various evaluation approaches, practitioners are often bogged down by the question of how to measure success and impact? When considering the goals and objectives of the program, what is the best way to prove there is a positive impact on the beneficiaries of the program, both participants and greater community members?

“Peace education has a long term focus and is undermined by the need to achieve rapid successes in order to safeguard follow-up funding. This impedes the development of local initiatives and leads to dependence on and decision-making by, outside actors. The pressure to achieve quick successes also leads to a focus on ‘visible and viable’ aspects such as rapid integration into employment. Holistic approaches need a longer timeframe, and their impact is difficult to quantify (Schell-Faucon, 2001).”

Funding often requires calculated statistics and outcomes to prove results, but often traditional monitoring and evaluation techniques are considered too rigid for this field. Outcomes are
usually the focus of traditional M&E, ignoring the inputs or general impact in the community, especially in the long run.

According to Jennings et al, “Development and evaluation of effective community-based practice and research is a promising and critical opportunity to further the goal of CYE to promote participatory processes” (2006). In 2012, the UNOSDP held their first Youth Leadership Programs in Qatar, Germany, and Switzerland bringing youth ages 18-25 from all over the world to meet with industry leaders to improve and develop their skills in sports for peacebuilding. The facilitation team led by Right to Play included Liverpool Football Club, the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), the International Judo Federation (IJF), the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF), Kick4life, InspiraSports, Women Win, Project Air Rwanda, Boxgirls and SwimSports to name a few (UNOSDP, 2013). While these youth programs were considered a success, it is the follow on projects and “the work after the Camp which will affect the communities that these youth serve”. The UNOSDP has recognized the importance of long term data collection in order to measure impact and efficacy. Therefore “the UNOSDP plans in 2013 to develop a new Monitoring & Evaluation system which will track the participants after their participation in the Camps and provide support to ensure that the legacy of these Camps lasts through the years”. In the words of Wilfred Lemke, the current Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on SDP, “I hope that the YLP will develop into a best practice for how SDP can have a concrete impact and I am confident that the young participants will become role models and multipliers in their local communities”.

In Levermore’s third article on evaluating sport-for-development M&E approaches (2011), his research states that considerable evaluation is being conducted by organizations through a positivistic logframe either by itself or as part of a combined approach that may
include participatory methods well. One of the main limitations of monitoring and evaluation practices is that the majority (if not all of its approaches) are from a western, global north bias. According to Paulo Freire in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, “many political and educational plans have failed because their authors designed them according to their own personal views of reality, never once taking into account (except as mere objects of their action) the woman/man-in-a-situation towards whom their program was ostensibly directed (1970).” It is a similar criticism of M&E; how can youth & sports organizations evaluate the impact their programs have in the local, host community if their measurement standards by which the impact is determined are developed from a foreign culture? From another perspective, the need of evaluation is challenged by many organizations “because the evaluation process can be expensive, time-consuming, require technical expertise outside of staff, findings arrive too late and/or go unread, don’t always answer the ‘right’ question, lack analytical rigor and have access to limited quality of data (Baker, 2000; Bornstein, 2006; Cracknell, 2000 as cited by Levermore, 2011)”. Furthermore, many SDP organizations fear an evaluation process that would tarnish the project or organization’s reputation which leads to a lack in transparency.

Several efforts have already been made to creatively respond to evaluating the impact of SDP programs. A critical evaluation, for example, would concentrate on obtaining a cross-section of views from all stakeholders about their interpretation of what is being evaluated and also reflects on the subjectivity of the evaluator in this process. This addresses the need to provide wider context beyond outputs highlighted by specific programs and still includes funders’ needs in the assessment. “A core characteristic of critical evaluation is the aim for empowerment, where wider political and social meaning of the elements of the program
evaluated need to be ascertained (Taylor and Balloch, 2005 as cited in Levermore 2011).”

Another creative approach is the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique.

“Essentially, the process involves the collection of significant change (SC) stories emanating from the field level, and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. The designated staff and stakeholders are initially involved by ‘searching’ for project impact. Once changes have been captured, various people sit down together, read the stories aloud and have regular and often in-depth discussions about the value of these reported changes. When the technique is implemented successfully, whole teams of people begin to focus their attention on program impact (Davis, R.; Dart, J, 2005).”

According to its creator, Rick Davies, the MSC technique is a unique participatory approach that was created in an attempt to meet some of the challenges associated with monitoring and evaluating a complex rural development program in Bangladesh, which had diversity in both implementation and outcomes. With this contextual understanding of the definitions, limitations, challenges, and even creative approaches to M&E, further primary research will determine if any number of other creative evaluation methods has been adapted by the organizations interviewed, and how these international organizations are defining and measuring success in the first place.

**Research/Practitioner Inquiry Design**

Primary research was conducted through the interviews of three international organizations using sports programs to address youth empowerment and peacebuilding: Partners of the Americas, the World Affairs Council of Oregon, and Mercy Corps. These organizations were chosen for the being leaders in the field and for their enthusiasm to participate. First the selection of each organization will justified, and then the culture of inquiry will be described.

For the past 30 years, Partners of the Americas has led sport-related exchange programs involving thousands of youth and coaches from all over the Western Hemisphere, connecting
them with counterparts in different US states. Partners has emerged as a global leader in Sport for Development and Youth Workforce Development especially through the A Ganar! Alliance. Over 13,000 young people have participated in the A Ganar! youth workforce development training that uses the lessons from sport in over 16 countries in the Americas. After graduating from the training, 70% of youth find jobs, start their own business, or return to school. In essence, A Ganar! is a youth employment program wrapped inside of a ball. At-risk youth, ages 16-24, acquire marketable job expertise by building on six core sport-based skills: teamwork, communication, discipline, respect, a focus on results, and continual self-improvement. In 7-9 months, youth learn life and vocational skills and complete internships with local businesses. They learn to bring the best values of sport and apply them to the workplace (Partners of the Americas, 2014).

The World Affairs Council of Oregon has a strong and successful mission of connecting Oregonians to the rest of the world. Since 1950, their International Visitor Program (IVP) has fostered meaningful connections between Oregonians and young leaders from over 120 countries through government programs. The IVP receives more than 600 visitors from around the world, with an excelling reputation for youth programming (WACO, 2014); in March, 2014 alone the Council had 15 different visitor programs that were simultaneously being conducted. The World Affairs Council was the sponsoring organization of this capstone paper as both the site of my second practicum where I worked as a program coordinator intern, and as an organization looking to expand their programming in youth programs that empower through sports.

Mercy Corps is a well-known organization in the field of international development and is known around the world for their sustainable and empowering practices. Sport for Change is the umbrella term for all Mercy Corps programs that use sports and games to help young people.
Their programs promote health awareness, speed psychological recovery in places affected by conflict and disaster and improve social inclusion and cohesion. They take advantage of the natural appeal and convening power of sport to young people and their communities, bring diverse groups together and teach valuable life skills in a way that’s participatory and transformative. In the past five years, Mercy Corps has implemented over 40 sport-related projects in 25 countries, reaching more than 50,000 youth [and] each program is specially customized to meet local needs (*Mercy Corps Best Practices*, 2011).

The culture of inquiry for this research was developed through semi-structured interviews, one with each organization, so as to develop a baseline of questions from the information obtained in current literature and the field while still allowing for flexible follow-up questions to receive the most authentic and pertinent answers possible. While initial contact was attempted with various organizations, a minimum of three interviews was maintained for sufficient triangulation and data analysis. Interviews with the World Affairs Council and Mercy Corps were conducted in person at their respective offices in Portland, OR. The interview with Partners of the Americas was conducted over the phone. The interviews with Mercy Corps and Partners of the Americas were both individual interviews, whereas the World Affairs Council of Oregon interview was a focus group with both Amy Barss and Andrew Neal present together, at their request.

The questions were open ended with content focused on how the programs evaluate their success and the methodologies developed to achieve the programs’ objectives, as well as obstacles and challenges (see Appendix A for list of baseline questions). The participants signed an informed consent form in which they were made aware of all their rights to keep their programs anonymous (to ensure no risk of providing honest and detailed responses), rights to ask
questions, or to withdraw at any point in time (see Appendix B for consent form). No participants wished to remain anonymous and all signed and understood the informed consent form, and also received a list of interview questions prior to the interview. Participants received a copy of each draft of this capstone paper to protect and verify the participant’s ownership of quotes and an accurate representation of primary information obtained through the interviewing process.

There are a few limitations that have been accounted for in this research. First, a selection bias was present not only because it depended on voluntary participation, but also because only selected organizations received an initial invitation to participate based on previous connections. Another limitation includes the lack of recording during only the interview with Partners of the Americas. Because it was conducted over the phone and an alternative recording device was not available transcription was conducted during the interview so there may be less detailed documentation of responses when compared to the other two interviews.

**Presentation & Analysis of Data**

The presentation and analysis of the data collected through these three interviews with Partners of the Americas, the World affairs Council and Mercy Corps will be displayed first through a Table to compare and contrast responses. Second, the data will be analyzed through patterns and common themes. Third, specific quotes are provided to draw attention to the similarity between interview responses and obstacles mentioned within M&E literature. Finally, a subsection will be included to discuss and summarize the data presented here.

Each hour long interview covered the following main areas of content: overarching goals of program; necessary elements for success; definition of success; lessons learned/
recommendations; M&E data collection tools; how impact should be measured; accountability & legitimacy; and biggest obstacles and challenges (for an explicit list of Interview questions see Appendix A). These topics were compiled based on the review of current literature in SDP, Conflict Transformation, Youth Development, and M&E (previously evaluated in chapters 1-4, respectively) and the topics were adapted as necessary since the interviews were semi-structured.

The following Table summarizes the overall information collected from each interview:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching goals of program?</th>
<th>Partners of the Americas</th>
<th>World Affairs Council of Oregon</th>
<th>Mercy Corps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front End Analysis, be flexible, experiential learning cycle, M&amp;E</td>
<td>Environment for shared experiences, experiential learning cycle, opportunities to show learning, connecting wider social issues</td>
<td>Sustainability over time, using existing local structures, well-designed curriculum, dynamic and engaging training, post-training support for coaches, good relationships between coaches and participants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of Success.</th>
<th>Partners of the Americas</th>
<th>World Affairs Council of Oregon</th>
<th>Mercy Corps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depth and Breadth: How many students are we reaching and how well do we reach them?</td>
<td>Multiplier effect, sustainable program, local impact, foundation/infrastructure, take participant culture into account</td>
<td>Depends on project. M&amp;E plan for peacebuilding will include interpersonal relationship, perception indicators, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set a firm foundation, develop strong M&amp;E plan</td>
<td>Knowing best practices of youth leadership, civic engagement and education outside of our industry; have a good infrastructure; evaluate what’s right for your organization</td>
<td>High quality materials for curriculum and training; high energy, high efficient training; ongoing support for coaches; how to reach cohorts after program finishes, capacity building of local</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3- Capstone Interview Responses
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M&amp;E Data collection Tools?</th>
<th>Post-program data collection through local organizations. Gather stats of youth after program.</th>
<th>Statistics, collecting stories, internal evaluations, E-evaluations in future?, verbal feedback, observations from partners, experiential learning cycle, questionnaires</th>
<th>Pre- &amp; post-surveys tools, video-based evaluation, participatory videos, attendance records, observational surveys, focus group discussions, classroom observations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How should impact be measured?</td>
<td>How changes in behavior are taking place.</td>
<td>More synchronization over project phases with various partners, focus on broader goals, post-program observations, feedback, more funding built in for the end of a project.</td>
<td>Co-design indicators of success with beneficiaries, donors and industry experts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability &amp; Legitimacy?</td>
<td>1. Engage beneficiaries in design 2. pre-screening</td>
<td>Feedback and evaluations from community, resources, and participants</td>
<td>Include communities/beneficiaries in project implementation and design, participant feedback, ask key informants as participants and within community, critical reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biggest obstacles and challenges?</td>
<td>Resources: Time, Funding. Looking to enhance M&amp;E</td>
<td>M&amp;E, Does M&amp;E info get applied, lack of funding, infrastructure required for liability, not being able to evaluate the whole process ourselves, time limitations,</td>
<td>Synchronicity throughout a program, time constraints, getting the right coaches/mentors &amp; supporting them, measuring a more peaceful society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses above were analyzed for patterns and commonalities. There were 14 common themes mentioned in the answers of all three interviews:

1. Funding limitations
2. The importance of pre-screening and developing a program foundation
3. The use and need for creativity
4. The utmost importance of the non-sport objectives
5. Limitations of project length
6. The importance of sustainability and how to achieve it
7. The importance of building capacity at a local level
8. The importance of training staff/facilitators/coaches
9. The need to better measure impact as a network/industry
10. The importance and challenge of measuring post-program impact
11. The Experiential Learning Cycle
12. The collection of qualitative data
13. The collection of quantitative data
14. “It depends”/ “It varies from program to program”

There were also 7 common themes mentioned in two of the three interviews:

1. The challenge of synchronization as a program transitions to different agencies and staff in different phases of the program
2. The need and importance of a feedback culture
3. The need for organizations to critically reflect on their programs & efforts
4. The importance of a strong M&E plan
5. The importance of engaging beneficiaries and participants in the design of the program
6. The value of multiple perspectives in the implementation and design process.
7. The importance of communication between partnering organizations.

When asked about the goals of their respective programs, both Partners of the Americas and the World Affairs Council of Oregon mentioned civic engagement and community buy-in.

“There’s that level of making sure that we meet deliverables; budget, health and safety, etc. And there’s getting people’s subjective evaluations of their experiences either as a participant or as like an ELL escort or host or professional resource. It’s typically, more like verbal feedback to evaluate whether students and visitors are getting those broader goals of mutual understanding, leadership goals, and an understanding of civic engagement. I think those are the big goals and how they express that comes out a lot of different ways (Neal, 2014).”

Both organizations also explicitly mentioned the experiential learning cycle and Mercy Corps similarly described the importance a well-designed curriculum, dynamic training, and good relationships between coaches and participants. All three organizations include impact and quality (depth of reaching participants, local impact, and interpersonal relationship) within their definition of a successful program and additionally, Partners of the Americas and the World Affairs Council of Oregon also mentioned the quantitative impact of how many children are reached. For lessons learned and recommendations, Partners of the Americas and the World Affairs Council both mentioned the need to develop a firm foundation and infrastructure prior to
the program. The World Affairs Council also mentioned the importance of critical self-reflecting as an organization, as did Mercy Corps.

For questions regarding monitoring and evaluation, specifically the data collection tools used, all three organizations mentioned the use of quantitative collection methods to gather statistics, such as questionnaires, surveys, etc. The World Affairs Council and Mercy Corps also mentioned collecting qualitative data and stories. Mercy Corps even shared an example of a participatory video method in one of their programs as a creative response to measure the impact of their soccer program after the post-election violence in Kenya.

“I would say the most standard tools are pre- and post-survey tools. We were able to get a bit more creative through one program. It was a post-conflict program in Kenya using sport and that was a documentary video. A group called InsightShare out of the UK came we basically hired them to do a video based evaluation. And what it was very participatory and the students or the young people in the program were taught how to go out and make documentary film and act it out; what they thought were the most significant change-stories as a result of their participation in that program. I think that was complemented with a more traditional survey too (Streng, 2014).”

When asked how they believed impact should be measured Fernando Maldonado, from Partners of the Americas, stated he would like to impact measured by behavior changes that are taking place in participants and how that is occurring. Amy Barss and Andrew Neal from the World Affairs Council said they would like to see impact measured with better synchronization among partners, more feedback, a focus on broader program goals, and more allocated funding post-program evaluations. While, Matt Streng from Mercy Corps said in an ideal setting that impact would be measured by a set of indicators that were co-designed by beneficiaries, donors, and program experts together.
“I think there needs to be a lot more work to engage community, engage intended beneficiaries and have them co-design those indicators and maybe have some of your indicators be of industry standards so you could speak to a technical field, whether that’s health/peacebuilding & conflict/or food security, depending on what that might be. And donors, that’s an important stakeholder audience and I think it is critical that agencies from outside the community are accountable to those communities and set up what they will be accountable to at the beginning (Streng, 2014).”

Partners of the Americas and Mercy Corps both stated that they maintained accountability to their beneficiaries and participants by engaging them in the implementation and design of the program, and the World Affairs Council and Mercy Corps stated that they used feedback after the program.

Finally, when asked about the biggest challenges and obstacles they faced in the field all three organizations mentioned the inherent limitations of a short term program (be it 30 days, nine months, or one year). Partners of the Americas and the World Affairs Council also both mentioned the lack of resources and funding for their programming as a challenge, and their M&E approaches in general.

“We are currently looking to enhance this part of our program, but we rely heavily on the partners we have in the host country. Primarily, we work with grassroots organizations for implementing training and collecting various forms of data. We also track a number of youth registered with the programs. How many graduate? How many drop-out? How many of those are getting jobs? Comparing output driven methodology as opposed to outcomes is important; it requires a certain level of rigor for outcomes. We’re often engaged in this uphill battle in recent years, where there’s been a huge emphasis, with good reason, on M&E for numerous reasons but part of the challenge is you need resources (Maldonado, 2014.”

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2 These were specific examples of program length provided during the interviews. Mercy Corps mentioned a nine month program, the World Affairs Council mentioned a typical program of 30 days included post-program reunions, and Partners of the Americas mentioned having programs that last 1-2 years.
Amy Barss, the Director of the International Visitors Program at The World Affairs Council of Oregon, furthermore explained how from a local organization’s perspective, they are constrained by the requirements of grant funding and lack of communication with government partners that provide the funding.

“We don’t always get completely filled in on the complete program goals that they may have… It would be good to have more funding built in to the end of the project. It’s been acknowledged too that this is very difficult to get grant funding for. A story is great, but funders want to be able to see that you’ve demonstrated impact through your programs (Barss, 2014).”

Both the World Affairs Council and Mercy Corps mentioned the challenge of communication with partners. Andrew Neal from the World affairs Council explains:

“I think there needs to be more synchronization across the different partners because you may have the folks in D.C. at the State Department E.C.A. conceiving of a project; then you have U.S. embassies abroad recruiting participants; then you have a national agency administering the whole program; then, us and another local organizations doing a smaller component of that; then there’s the follow-on projects after. I think that there needs to be more synchronization looking at the whole program not just looking at your individual component (Neal, 2014).”

Maintaining a fluid transition with other staff and agencies as the program advanced through its various stages is a notable challenge and often one that is intertwined with other obstacles, such as resources and funding. All three programs advocated the relevancy of this practitioner inquiry, and stated that there was room for improvement.

“I’m a big believer that there’s always room for improvement. I would be inclined to invest more in changes in behavior and why certain things change. How decisions change and how change actually takes place. The sociology aspect of it and what triggers it; look at the actual outcomes not just outputs (Maldonado, 2014).”
This quote from Fernando Maldonado of Partners of the Americas brings full circle the idea of linking theory and practice. Literature and research should be rooted in challenges practitioners face in the field, while practice should begin with the theories and arguments made by experts in the field.

**DISCUSSION & SUMMARY**

Since responses in all three interviews indicated that monitoring and impact evaluation is indeed a challenge it can be conclusion is verified that there is a call for “a paradigm shift in measuring social worth of sport to allow and celebrate richer/deeper interpretations using qualitative/participatory methods alongside quantitative measure” (Levermore, 2011). I would argue since it was a common theme within all 3 interviews that this paradigm shift should be taken one step further in searching for creative approaches to ethically satisfy both funders and beneficiaries. The purpose of a sport for development program that critically empowers youth in order to transform conflict is to respond to the needs of the beneficiaries that will be impacted. Funders are often put in the driver’s seat, which is not necessarily negative, but this research concludes that it is important to acknowledge the funders and donors as one of many stakeholders. One conclusion that can be drawn is that there is not one approach or one single solution to creatively combining qualitative and quantitative monitoring and impact evaluation techniques. The adaptability of sports programs is just as important as the adaptability of evaluation methods.

By far, the most common theme and answer given was “it depends” or that “it varies from program to program”. Between all three interviews and all four persons interviewed these statements were made a total of 13 times. The popularity of this response means the organization
and program is acknowledging that its beneficiaries will not experience empowerment the same way, and the organization is therefore realizing that it is important to contextualize the entire youth program, whether through sports or any other, within the local cultures of those participating. It also means that the program is built around the specifics of the program and there may be commonalities, but not a sweeping, general approach. “There is too much pressure for ‘easy empirical generalization’ to be made in order to justify that sport can be applied unilaterally for development, without really taking into account cultural nuances (Levermore, 2011).” All of the organizations interviewed regularly mentioned the importance of knowing their limitations be it time, funding, or otherwise. Being aware of these limitations allows these organizations to focus on the common themes that were developed in Table 2: general safety and acceptance, self-esteem of participants, communication & collaboration skills, critical reflection & awareness, individual and community connections, and specific conflict management skills.

These themes determined by the skills and dimensions of youth development, and the benefits of SDP programs support the overall conclusion of this research which is that in order to evaluate the successful impact of a program the definition must indeed be purposefully determined so that the evaluation techniques can appropriately match the design, preferably with the input of beneficiaries in the inception phase. All three organizations spoke to using creativity, the use of quantitative M&E methodologies, and the value of balancing that with community and qualitative impact. The bottom-line is that if the sport itself is not the focus of the program then the program must be very clear about what the focus is. This means having staff that are thoroughly trained in the necessary competencies of the program goals, knowing how the success of the program will holistically be evaluated, and reinforcing local capacity so that the program goals are sustainable. Perhaps, one lesson that can be taken away from these interviews and the
contextual research of these paper is that SDP programs need the all the same competencies they are teaching to their participants.

**Conclusion**

The contributions of this capstone consist of an inquiry process that compiles various techniques, methods and pedagogy used to evaluate the success of sports and peacebuilding programs so that other organizations can learn from past and current practices. “Given the field’s relative infancy, researchers have yet to move seriously beyond these case-studies to produce more analytical and generalized work (Giuliantti, 2011).” The anticipated outcome is that this primary research contextualized in the cross-discipline fields of SDP, Conflict transformation, Youth Development, and Monitoring and Evaluation will provide an insight and connection to how leading organizations are addressing these challenges of measuring impact and success. In the words of Simon Norton and John Ungerleider during the 2013 SIT course on Youth Program Leadership and Design, “we didn’t learn how to be youth leaders by reading about it” (2013); it’s a field of work that requires practice, adjustment and a very hands-on approach. Yet, hopefully by critically reflecting and learning from these best practices relative to SDP programs the dialogue will continue and more creative solutions will develop.

Recommendations for further research include the use of social media to contact and monitor long term impact after the life of an SDP program. “U.S. Embassies need to track former IVLP participants consistently over the long-term in order to measure more effectively the effect of the program…Areas for further research includes IVLP alumni associations and the role of social media (Mock, 2012).” Beneficial research could also be conducted with governmental organizations such as USAID, the State Department, and the World Bank to learn how decisions
and policies are made around program M&E. Also, further research could be beneficial in gathering best practices of other leading SDP organizations such as Peace Players international, Grassroots soccer, the UNOSDP Youth Programs and Right to Play.
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Appendix A

Initial Capstone Interview Questions

Background Information

1. Please state your name, organization and the responsibilities of our position/department.

2. What are the goal(s) and specific objectives of each program?

3. What do you use for monitoring and evaluation tools?

“Success”

4. In your experience, what are the necessary elements for a successful sports program for youth?

5. How would you define success of these programs?

6. How is success and participant impact measured? How do you think it should be measured?

Challenges & Context

7. What are the biggest obstacles and challenges in the field?

8. How do programs maintain accountability and legitimacy? Is participant and community feedback collected and used?

10. What kinds of training and competencies do coaches and field implementers need to have in successful sports for development program?

Lessons Learned

11. What lessons have you learned and what recommendations would you give to other similar programs?

12. Is there anyone else you feel has an important perspective and therefore should be interviewed for this research?

13. Final comments and/or questions?
Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

SIT Graduate Institute

Title of Capstone: Sports for Development and Peace (SDP): How to measure success of youth programs

Researcher: AnnMarie Fitzhenry, Master’s Candidate in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation

Advisor: John Ungerleider, Professor of Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation

Sponsoring Organization: World Affairs Council of Oregon (WACO)

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH: You are invited to participate in a research study on the monitoring and evaluation techniques of peacebuilding and youth development programs that use sports. The purpose of this study is to understand how various organizations evaluate their programs and define the success and progress in order to address ethical considerations and achieve the programs’ objectives.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are minimal to no risks in participating in this study. While there will be no compensation or payment, participants will benefit by having the opportunity to reflect and assess the monitoring and evaluation techniques of their programs and will be able to collaborate on possible approaches and solutions of how best to monitor the success of youth programs in Sports for Development and Peace.

DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY: The data collected in your interview in relation to your identity and the organization you represent will be kept as confidential files and no one other than me, AnnMarie Fitzhenry, will have access to them. At your request, the information you provide will be coded and anonymity will be maintained, and only general, non-identifiable data will be shared. *Please only sign and date the line below if you wish to remain anonymous:

SIGNATURE: ______________ DATE: ______________

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation will take approximately one hour and interviews will take place during the spring of 2014, at your convenience.

HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED: The information gathered during interviews will be used in the Capstone paper and presentation of the researcher, AnnMarie Fitzhenry, at the SIT Graduate Institute. If you wish to read and approve the final research before it is submitted and published, I will happily provide a copy upon request.

PARTICIPANTS RIGHTS: Your participation in this project is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time. You also have the right to refuse to answer particular questions and are able to ask questions at any point before, during or after the interview. Your individual privacy and confidentiality, as well as that of your organization, will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

SIGNATURE ______________ DATE ______________