

Chapter 1

Sport for Development and Peace: Opportunities, Challenges and the Commonwealth's Response

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This chapter provides a context for the Commonwealth's engagement with sport for development and peace (SDP) by briefly charting the growth of the sector from the perspective of the intergovernmental SDP policy development and the establishment of pan-Commonwealth SDP policy instruments and support mechanisms. In particular, relevant resolutions at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs), Commonwealth Sport Ministers Meetings (CSMMs) and in other relevant pan-Commonwealth forums are highlighted.

The paper introduces key challenges in working to strengthen SDP policy within Commonwealth member countries, in particular:

- limited policy instruments, support mechanisms, delivery programming and/or resourcing to scale SDP initiatives;
- concerns voiced by development actors that many sport stakeholders over-simplify contextual variance and the development challenges sport claims to address;
- the close alignment of sport and issues associated with globalisation;
- pronounced inequity in the distribution of resources within the broader sport sector – in particular when considered through a gender, geographical or participatory lens; and
- the hesitation among some development actors to engage with/ resource SDP, borne out of cautiousness that SDP is geared as much to the promotion of elite sport as it is to contributing to broad human and social development objectives.

The chapter concludes by asking that as SDP is now established within international development discourse, do SDP stakeholders consider responding to these issues as having equal importance to, or even superseding, continued advocacy efforts.

1.1 The growth of sport for development and peace within international development efforts

Recognition of the contribution sport-based approaches can make to development and peace-building objectives has grown markedly over the last ten years. The United Nations General Assembly support for Resolution 66/7, promoting the contribution sport can make to international development goals, marks the tenth consecutive year that the assembly has passed a resolution recognising the interplay of sport, development and peace-building.¹ In that time the number of agencies using sport as a key strategy in development work has grown more than five-fold (Kay 2010), most notably in work taking place at the community level. Equally a significant number of sport stakeholders, including national and international federations, have established partnerships with development actors and integrated development messaging into their communication and growth strategies.²

Within the international community the use of sport in the development efforts of the United Nations and inter-governmental system has also expanded (UNOSDP 2012). Recognising the growing importance of the SDP sector, the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) was established in 2005 to co-ordinate this sector, in particular within the United Nations system. The UNOSDP also co-ordinates the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG), whose aim is to promote the integration of sport for development and peace (SDP) policy recommendations into the development strategies of governments. This group's landmark report, *Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Governments*, promoted the potential contribution of sport to development and peace, and has acted as a key reference document for international efforts to strengthen SDP (SDP IWG 2008).

Following the lead of the United Nations, a range of intergovernmental bodies, most notably the Council of Europe, Africa Union Commission and Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), have considered the policy implications of the interplay between sport and social development issues in more detail.³

Through this growth period Commonwealth stakeholders have played an important role in the international SDP community. Commonwealth governments are among the leading advocates for SDP and many have integrated sport-based approaches within domestic and international development policy and strategies (CABOS 2010). Additionally, many Commonwealth-based agencies are consistently cited as leading examples of SDP good practice in international meetings and platforms.

1.2 Commonwealth sport for development and peace policy instruments

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 countries that support one another and work together towards shared goals in democracy and development. Commonwealth members are united through the association's values of: democracy, freedom, peace, the rule of law and opportunity for all.⁴ In support of their association, Commonwealth Heads of Government and ministers responsible for key policy areas meet regularly. This ensures that Commonwealth policies and programmes represent views of members and gives governments a better understanding of one another's goals.

There are three intergovernmental organisations supporting the Commonwealth and delivering on the outcomes of these meetings: the Commonwealth Secretariat, charged with executing the plans agreed by Commonwealth Heads of Government and ministers through technical assistance, advice and policy development; the Commonwealth Foundation, which works with civil society organisations to promote democracy, development and cultural understanding; and the Commonwealth of Learning, which encourages the development and sharing of open learning and distance education. In addition, the Commonwealth boasts a worldwide network of around 90 professional and advocacy organisations. They work at the local, national, regional and/or international levels and play crucial roles in policy, political or social aspects of Commonwealth life. Due to its role overseeing the Commonwealth Games, a unique,

world class, multi-sports event, the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) is one of highest profile of these organisations. It has a well-established role in Heads of Government forums and is the key Commonwealth organisation interfacing with the sport movement.

Within this context, Commonwealth leaders have consistently endorsed the role SDP can play in development and peace work, in particular in the domain of youth engagement and empowerment. Commonwealth Heads of Government reinforced this commitment during their 2011 meeting, and in doing so endorsed the observations of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (EPG) of the need for Commonwealth governments and sport stakeholders alike, including the Commonwealth Games movement, to intensify efforts to use sport as a platform to promote peace and development. Included in these recommendations was an endorsement that the Commonwealth Secretariat be mandated to play ‘a co-ordinating role to support member countries strengthen SDP initiatives’ (CHOGM 2011).

The CHOGM resolutions were particularly significant for two reasons. First, they marked the first time official Commonwealth organisations had been specifically requested to support SDP by CHOGM, the highest decision-making body in the Commonwealth. Second, they recognised and, through the EPG report, formally referenced the work the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport (CABOS) has done analysing the significance of SDP in the Commonwealth and framing how formal Commonwealth organisations should respond (CABOS 2010). The endorsement by Heads of Government that the Commonwealth Secretariat play a co-ordinating role to support SDP also reinforced decisions of consecutive Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meetings, which highlighted the important interplay of sport, development and peace and the need for increased attention across the Commonwealth (CSMM 2012).

Both sports ministers and CABOS have been consistent in identifying that the Commonwealth Secretariat can best contribute to strengthening SDP through a targeted focus in two areas. First, working with members countries to strengthen national SDP policy mechanisms and, second, promoting further collaboration among Commonwealth governments and with other relevant international organisations in the area of SDP.

This direction recognised both the scope of the Secretariat's resources, the role played by other stakeholders and that for SDP initiatives to be sustainable, resourcing must come from national structures or long-term partnerships.

1.3 Commonwealth sport for development and peace guidelines and framework

Based on key Commonwealth policy instruments highlighted above, the Commonwealth Secretariat supports SDP in the Commonwealth through:

- promoting SDP as a focus area for Commonwealth meetings and platforms in relevant policy domains; namely, the Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting, Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport, within the Commonwealth's youth networks where appropriate and within other Commonwealth policy domains such as social transformation and human rights; and
- providing technical assistance to a small number of identified member governments to develop national action plans focused on strengthening SDP policy, strategy and support mechanisms.

To provide a structure for this work the Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with CABOS and proactive member countries, developed a framework and guidelines for Commonwealth countries seeking to strengthen the sports contribution to development and peace efforts. The framework and guidelines form a resource under the title *The Commonwealth Guide to Advancing Development through Sport* (Kay and Dudfield 2013). The preparation of this guide was specifically requested by ministers at the Fifth Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting in Delhi, India, to build on the work of the UN International Working Group on Sport for Development and Peace (SDP IWG 2008). *The Commonwealth Guide* was developed following a considered consultation process and in collaboration with representatives of Commonwealth governments, sport for development and peace (SDP) experts and leading non-government agencies. The guidelines and framework provide a model for member countries to identify where sport is being used, or could be used, to strengthen development work, and the key stakeholders to drive this. The framework also sets out key

principles for strengthening SDP in the Commonwealth, as endorsed by sport ministers, and detailed indicators to analyse the status of policy, strategy and support mechanisms. A description of headline principles and indicators are provided in Annex 1.1. The Sixth Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting, held in London in 2012, endorsed the guide and requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to work with identified member countries to utilise the Commonwealth framework, and other key international policy documents, as a basis for national action planning projects (CSMM 2012).

1.4 Challenges and issues in strengthening sport for development and peace in the Commonwealth

In considering the growth of SDP over the past decade and the Commonwealth's response, key issues affecting the interplay of sport and development should also be noted.

While numerous international and Commonwealth policy declarations and publications have supported the principle of SDP, insufficient support mechanisms, delivery instruments and resourcing currently exist in many member countries to fully scale SDP initiatives. A contributing factor is that in many countries SDP is delegated to sport ministries and sport stakeholders. While many of these actors are highly supportive of SDP, they have to balance elite sport and sport development priorities with investment in SDP drawing from an already over-stretched resource pool.

Limited resource investment in SDP initiatives is also exacerbated by a perception among some development actors that the sport sector has access to substantial corporate resources and revenue from major events. While some areas of elite sport, in some contexts, enjoy access to a substantial resource pool, even a cursory analysis reveals a pronounced inequity in the distribution of these resources; if considered through a gender, class, able-bodied/disabled, geographical or participation lens, that inequity is even more pronounced. As such, in many Commonwealth countries both the total pool of resources within sport, and its prioritisation, is insufficient to scale sport-for-all or SDP initiatives.

Additionally, given the high profile of sport as a cultural phenomenon in many Commonwealth countries, other development actors can be hesitant to engage with SDP out of

concern that this profile, often borne out of a focus on elite and high-performance sport, will overshadow broader development goals. While the Commonwealth's SDP guidelines emphasise that effective SDP policy, strategy and delivery should be centred on development goals (CSMM 2012), many actors in the broader development sector remain cautious that SDP is geared as much to the promotion of elite sport as it is to contributing to broad human and social development objectives.

Finally, the close alignment between sport and issues associated with globalisation, along with concerns that many sport stakeholders over-simplify development challenges, should be noted. Academics and development professionals alike have cautioned that the SDP sector may underestimate the scope of the development challenges they claim to address and the complexity of working in these areas.⁵ Impacting on this dynamic is a considerable push to promote sport as an intrinsic force for good, often at the expense of recognising and addressing challenges to the integrity of sport or the contextual variation in the social, cultural and economic impact sport makes. While in many contexts sport-linked approaches have made a positive contribution to development, this is far from being universal. There have been instances both within and beyond the Commonwealth where sport has been poorly planned, overly aligned to extremist nationalist, political or economic motives or beset by doping and corruption scandals such that a negative impact on human and social development could be argued. Given this dynamic, advocates who overstate the impact of sport-linked approaches may well contribute to the scepticism among some development actors as to the role sport can play, and so weaken gains made positioning SDP as a credible approach.

Given these challenges, the Commonwealth has adopted a measured approach to SDP. CABOS advises that sport should not be positioned as a panacea for all development challenges. Instead it highlights that sport is best utilised as one tool within broader development efforts and strategies. Further, sport can be utilised most effectively when well planned, managed appropriately and in responding to the needs and dynamics of the context within which it is being used. CABOS provides a concise definition of this position in framing sport for development and peace (SDP), as 'the intentional use of sport, play and physical activity as a viable, practical and effective tool

to contribute to development and peace goals' (CABOS 2010). In this sense the Commonwealth promotes a position that SDP is part of, but can be distinguished from, sport development, and in many cases 'seeks out those not already involved in sport' (Kidd 2008). This position clarifies that within SDP approaches identified human and social development aims are paramount, and it is recommended these aims frame SDP policy and programming.

1.5 Conclusion

Sport for development and peace (SDP) has grown significantly in the Commonwealth over the past decade. While community-based efforts have been critical to this growth, many Commonwealth governments have also played an important role. However, in many contexts competing priorities, a disconnect from other development actors, under-developed policy frameworks and limited resources prevent scalable SDP programming. As SDP is now established within international development discourse, it may be timely for SDP stakeholders to consider responding to these issues as having equal importance to, or even superseding, continued advocacy efforts.

Annex 1.1 Commonwealth Framework and Guidelines on Sport for Development and Peace

The *Commonwealth Guide to Advancing Development through Sport* was developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat at the request of Commonwealth Sport Ministers. The framework provides a practical tool to support co-ordination, analysis and action planning; to assist countries to strengthen policy environments; and to support mechanisms for Sport for Development and Peace (SDP).

The framework is intended to support the following functions:

Analysis

Officials can use the framework to conduct a baseline analysis of the national SDP policy environment, strategy and support mechanisms. The indicators within the framework can be used as the criteria for analysis. This process assists in both the identification of good practice and areas that could potentially be strengthened.

Planning

The analysis process helps to identify good practice and areas to be strengthened. This provides information that can support a more systematic approach to planning how to develop and strengthen SDP, and utilised to guide prioritisation and investment.

Monitoring

Subsequently the framework can be utilised as a monitoring tool by undertaking periodic analysis of the SDP policy environment, strategy and support mechanisms and reviewing this against initial baseline analysis.

Reference points and indicators

Principles	Indicators of established policy, strategy and support mechanisms
1. SDP must be explicitly linked to the Commonwealth's shared values and commitment to promoting development, democracy and diversity.	1.1 The commitment of sport and development stakeholders to SDP 1.2 Policy frameworks for SDP 1.3 Integrity, governance and administration guidelines, co-ordination and support for sport organisations

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<p>2. SDP should leverage sustainable, quality and ongoing sport activity and be intentionally planned to realise specific developmental goals.</p>	<p>2.1 Resource mobilisation and allocation for SDP</p> <p>2.2 SDP planning, risk management and monitoring and evaluation systems</p> <p>2.3 SDP capacity building offers</p> <p>2.4 Development messaging integrated into major sporting events and further promotion through sporting role models</p> <p>2.5 Development legacy programmes incorporated into major sporting events and championships</p> <p>2.6 SDP networks, forums and symposiums</p>
<p>3. SDP is most effective when integrated within the development sector in support of national, regional, and local development priorities.</p>	<p>3.1 References to the value and contribution of sport in non-sport policy frameworks and strategies</p> <p>3.2 The alignment of SDP structures with youth engagement, education and health provision structures</p> <p>3.3 The inclusion of SDP stakeholders in multi-sector and cross-departmental initiatives</p> <p>3.4 Resources invested in SDP initiatives by non-sport actors</p>
<p>4. Fully accessible programming that ensures leaders and participants are safeguarded at all times, in particular children and those vulnerable to gender based violence.</p>	<p>4.1 Focus on safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults in sport policy and within broader legislation, policy and mechanisms</p> <p>4.2 Guidelines and resources to support safeguarding and protection in sport (inclusive of designated SDP initiatives)</p> <p>4.3 Designated authorities responsible for safeguarding and protection in sport (inclusive of designated SDP initiatives)</p> <p>4.4 Focus on equality and inclusion within sport policy and broader legislation, policy and mechanisms</p> <p>4.5 Guidelines and resources to support equality and inclusion in sport (inclusive of designated SDP initiatives)</p> <p>4.6 Designated authorities responsible for strengthening equality and inclusion in sport (inclusive of designated SDP initiatives)</p>

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5. Decentralised programming that involves intended beneficiaries and their communities in the planning process, and takes local needs and assets into consideration.	<p>5.1 Decentralised co-ordination, strategies and funding mechanisms for increasing sport participation and strengthening SDP programming</p> <p>5.2 Opportunities for participatory SDP policy development and programme design</p> <p>5.3 Platforms for community-based SDP stakeholders to network</p> <p>5.4 Resources, reward and recognition for community-based SDP initiatives</p>
6. Programming designed on the basis of evidence-based models, and conducted with systematic measurement of progress and appropriate monitoring and evaluation.	<p>6.1 SDP research projects and initiatives backed by a commitment from the higher education sector</p> <p>6.2 Monitoring and evaluation of sport participation</p> <p>6.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the contribution made by sport-based interventions to development objectives</p>

Notes

- 1 See: www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/home (accessed 19 November 2013).
- 2 See, for example: www.sportaccord.com/en/what-we-do/sports-social-responsibility (accessed 19 November 2013).
- 3 See, for example: www.coe.int/EPAS (accessed 19 November 2013).
- 4 Set down by all Commonwealth Heads of Government at their biannual meetings (known as CHOGMs) in Singapore in 1971 and reaffirmed in Harare in 1991.
- 5 See, for example, Darnell 2012; Hartman and Kwauk 2011; and Levermore and Beacom 2009.

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