

## **NEW REALMS OF AGENCY: PROMOTING PEACE EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUITY THROUGH SPORT**

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### **Summary**

*"Having a well attuned sociological imagination can provide a compass for sport-activists to navigate a course between hope and expectation, or between idealism and fatalism. (Sugden 2012: 57)*

This chapter provides an overview of *new realms of agency*, pioneering work that advocates peace, empowerment and active participation. Drawing from the experiences of existing models of coexistence, such as the expanding sport, development and peace (SDP) sector, it offers a focus for scholarly inquiry into sport's relationship to conflict and peace. Remarkable results have been documented on the ongoing peace education programs—age-appropriate curricula, service-learning activities and civic engagement projects—that have been inspiring a new generation of athletes, educators, students and volunteers to become activists (peacemakers). In exploring the evolving realms of sport agency in this process the following questions are raised: Can sport serve as a platform for bridging socio-cultural and political gaps? Is sport an effective agent of social change, a means for building sustainable peaceful relations? Can sport be used as a tool to bring gender issues into the mainstream of society since gender equity is never separate from diversity issues or respect for diversity: ethnicity, race, disability, age, language, color, income, etc. Global grassroots movements for peace education have been underway for many years. A wide variety of organizations have been using sport

to nurture peacemaking across divided communities, to promote gender equity and eliminate racism and violence in schools and communities, and in particular campaigns to rid sport of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. The social space of Sport has been building up knowledge and experience in the promotion of peace and development and deploying this expertise in areas such as peace education.

## **1. Introduction: Peace Education**

Peace education today is a broad field which uses different approaches and disciplines. As a concept, it lends itself to many definitions. It has been defined as multicultural education, as conflict resolution education, as human rights education and as global citizenship education. To put it in simple terms, peace education empowers social groups and individuals with the values, tools and knowledge necessary to end violence and social injustices. It means learning the skills, behaviors and attitudes to live together successfully by valuing and respecting diversity: race, religion, gender, physical disability, age, etc. The Peace Education Foundation (<http://www.peace-ed.org/about.html>) defines it as educating children and adults in the dynamics of conflict resolution and promoting peacemaking skills in our homes, schools, community, the nation and the world. The United Nations (2012) defines it as an education that is "directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms". According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Article 26, Peace education promotes understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and furthers the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

In this context, evolving realms of sport agency are explored in this chapter by focusing on the ongoing peace education programs, cross generational dialogue and collaborative-intergenerational activities of grassroots community-based organizations, non-profits, social movements and NGOs such as (1) Football 4 Peace (F4P), (2) Ultimate Peace (UP), (3) Athletes United for Peace (4) Sport in Society (SIS), (5) Peace First, formerly Peace Games), (6) Mercy Corps (7) Teachers Without Borders, (TWB) and (8) Women's Initiative for Peace (Winpeace).

Sport can and does make a difference, despite the degeneration or devaluation of Olympic values today such as the recent abuse of an Olympic symbol. Specifically, in downtown Edinburgh, on June 21, 2012, a Scottish man stopped the Olympic torch-bearer to light his cigarette from the Olympic flame! However, what is extremely disturbing is the fact that the Olympic torch-bearer stopped running to light Calum MacDonald's cigarette! This could only have happened in Scotland— reports the *Daily Star* in an article entitled *London 2012: Olympic Torch doubles as a Cigarette Lighter (21/06/2012)*— and reporters rushed to capture this dreadful incident which was not disseminated widely in the media as opposed to the social media. Will the International Olympic Committee (IOC) issue an official statement condemning such acts of disrespect for Olympic symbols (values)? Other examples of the degeneration of Olympic values today are the systematic abuse of substances (doping), obsessive competitiveness that leads to violence, racial intolerance at sporting events, the gender leadership gap in sport governing bodies, commercialization, the modelification or de-athletization of male and female athletes in the mass media, the poor coverage of female

athletes and women's sports, sexual harassment in sport, the social capital drain due to the migration of athletic talent or the so called by researchers sport migration phenomena, the global migrant athlete, the migration of athletic talent and sports labor as well as the under-representation of migrants in mainstream sport institutions. One has to point out here that although many of the world's finest athletes and players are migrants or ethnic minorities, they are still under-represented in non-playing positions, in sport governing bodies (SGBs) and in positions of authority. Moreover, some sports still perceive themselves as not affected by exclusionary practices such as racism and the exclusion of migrants.

Conversely and alternatively, the international community has been systematically drawing on the power of sport as a resource of hope, a means to promote gender equality, development and peace. One has to point out here that the field of sport is not restricted to Olympic, elite or competitive sports. The social space of sport encompasses social interaction, such as play including *indigenous games and sports*, physical activity, fitness, physical education, leisure and recreational sports, etc. The United Nations (UN) member states have been increasingly recognizing the role of sport in their policies and legislation. Since the appointment of the first Special Adviser to the UN Secretary General on Sport for Development and Peace in 2001, the UN has been promoting sport as a cost-effective tool to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals—a set of benchmarks agreed on by the international community to be achieved by 2015.

Reconciliation through sports, namely bridging social inequality gaps through sport, combating the globalization of extremism in and through athlete activism, the promotion of new role models and mentors and intercultural synergies are vital, not only in view of the systematic misuse of Olympic values today but primarily in the light of the impact of globalization on racism and xenophobia. Accordingly this chapter presents arguments for the institutionalization of peace education as an integral part of the curricula in public schools beginning in pre-school or kindergarten. Incorporating peace education into educational policies and teaching practices means *getting them while they're young* before they start formulating social prejudices and stereotypes.

## **2. New Realms of Agency: The Impact of Sport Interventions**

*"There is no single agent, group or movement that can carry the hopes of humanity, but there are many points of engagement through sport that offer good causes for optimism that things can get better."* (Jarvie 2011: 21)

Sport has been increasingly seen as having a role to play in peacemaking processes and contributing to the resolution of enduring societal problems. It has been documented that sport serves as an effective tool for social mobilization on issues such as universal education, student engagement/activism, environmental sustainability, poverty reduction, racial inequalities and conflict-resolution. A number of studies have identified the expanding sport, development and peace (SDP) movement, contributing to the broad research field of conflict resolution. For example, in addressing the role of sport in peacemaking processes, Richard Giulianotti (2011) argues that sport's role in peace-building can come in many forms: pressure groups, social forums, campaigns,

activism, legislation, policy, writing, investigating, uncovering silences, reallocation of resources and by just refusing to accept injustice.

In defining the field of sport for development and peace, John Sugden (2012) draws lessons from sport interventions in three of the world's most troubled regions—the Middle East, South Africa and Northern Ireland—illustrating how small scale community-based sporting initiatives can evolve in ways that have positive impacts beyond their original boundaries. Sport initiatives have been successfully implemented in divided societies to develop and encourage respect, trust, responsibility, equality and inclusivity. Sugden also points out that "note should be taken of Bruce Kidd's view that, in and of itself, sport is of no intrinsic value: it is neither naturally good nor irrevocably bad. It is, like all collective human endeavors, a social construction that is malleable according to the social forces that surround it." (2012: 51)

Simon Darnell (2012) acknowledges that Sport in development initiatives has grown dramatically since 2007, now finding a place in the UN's millennium development goals. However, he raises questions as to whether sport can offer long-term solutions to societal problems. Looking at mega-sporting events, sporting celebrity and volunteer experience in the context of development, Darnell focuses on political, cultural and power issues, questioning the belief that sport can offer enduring solution to development issues. In outlining the most recent sociological research on the role of sport in development and drawing on the latest empirical research, he looks at what this reveals about the socio-political economy. Darnell does not seek to discredit or, as he says, "derail" SDP or any of the sport contributions in meeting development goals, but rather to raise critical questions about the social and political implications involved. Darnell asks questions such as those who are the targets of SDP, what inequality issues are addressed and what kind of world ideology or world view is championed through SDP?

Conversely, Grant Jarvie (2011) argues that *there are many points of engagement through sport*, stressing that many NGO'S have been at the forefront of initiatives that use sport to attack social and economic inequalities, i.e. using sport as a facet of humanitarian aid, providing pathways for hope in different parts of the world, such as Africa and Asia. One has to point out here that international recognition for the potential role that sport can play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals has placed sport higher up the agenda of organizations aiming to facilitate humanitarian aid packages for countries in need. For example, in examining the role of sport in producing social change, especially in areas of major crisis, such as war-torn zones and locations of forced migration, Jarvie (2011) argues that sport has become a means to an end, utilized by the United Nations and non-governmental organizations in partnership with local grassroots agencies.

Such an example is the *Annual Match Against Poverty* which mobilizes the public and promotes action on the Millennium Development Goals to end extreme poverty worldwide by 2015. For instance, the proceeds from the *9th Annual Match Against Poverty Match*, held on 13 December 2011 in Hamburg Germany, have gone towards the ongoing food crisis in the Horn of Africa, where over 13 million people suffer from famine, drought and conflict, and for humanitarian as well as for recovery activities in

Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. The UN has been working in these countries to provide emergency food aid, water, shelter and health services, while working on longer term development plans. Ronaldo and Zidane have been the driving force behind the *Match Against Poverty* since its inception in 2003, and in 2011 the organizers and players joined the global effort to address the ongoing crisis in the Horn of Africa. The 8th Match Against Poverty was held in Greece in 2010— hosted by Olympiacos Football Club in Piraeus—at which more than 30 international football players from top teams around the world competed. Clubs throughout Europe were invited to host the UEFA-backed 10th Match Against Poverty in 2012 organized by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Top-flight clubs from UEFA's 53 member associations were invited to submit their proposals by 22 June 2012.

At this point one has to call attention to the recent strategic alliance between the organization Peace and Sport (L'Organisation pour la Paix par le Sport) and the Dubai Sports Council, a collaboration established to make sport a driving force for social cohesion, development and peace in the Middle East region. Through this collaboration, the first *Peace and Sport Forum* in the Middle East will take place next year, April 2013, in the Emirate of Dubai. The target of this alliance is to introduce concrete measures to reconcile divided communities through sport— to encourage dialogue and ultimately help societies reconstruct peaceful foundations through youth education— vital in the unsettled climate following the social, economic and political upheavals in the aftermath of the "Arab Spring", *the Arabic rebellions* or *the Arab revolutions* and their global repercussions. Arab Spring refers to the uprisings that arose independently and spread across the Arab world in 2011, and are continuing in 2012. The movement originated in Tunisia in December 2010 and quickly spread to Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. This revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests that began on December 17, 2010, has to date forced from power rulers in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen. Civil uprisings and protests erupted in Syria, Bahrain, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Oman, Western Sahara as well as clashes at the Israeli borders, etc.

The 2013 Peace and Sport Forum plans to bring together—in a neutral environment—the region's leading decision-makers from sport, civil society and the private sector in order to define actions and long-term programs for social unity in the Middle East. The forum will include field programs in the region's disadvantaged areas and the involvement of top-level Arab athletes to inspire and act as role-models for young people.

Also dedicated to the thematic field of sport and development is the International Platform on Sport & Development (the 'Platform'), currently supported by key stakeholders from non-profits to private sector actors to government agencies. The 'Platform'—initiated after the first International Conference on Sport and Development in Magglingen, Switzerland in 2003—provides a hub for working together to enhance the profile, credibility and effectiveness of using sport as a tool for development: sharing knowledge, increasing visibility, encouraging alliances, building good practice, facilitating coordination and fostering partnerships.

Another platform which is also empowering the societal role of sport and supporting sport agency is the one established in November 2011—the Nyon Declaration— giving

athletes a united global voice on issues such as the athletes' rights, the equal treatment of all athletes regardless of gender, ethnic background, religion, the crisis in sport governance, transparency issues, and the right to organize collectively in player associations and unions. "There is a consensus among players that a crisis in sport governance exists. Athletes now have a platform to assert their independent voice without being filtered by sport administrators," said Walter Palmer, responsible for sport at UNI Global Union, speaking at the World Athletes Summit in Nyon. (UNI Global Union 2011)

### **2.1. Athletes Rights: The Rights of Sportsmen and Sportswomen**

*"Dear Mr. Howman, Dear Mr. Rogge [...] It's finally time to give the sport back to the athletes. The athlete trade unions are the only independent voice of sportsmen and sportswomen. And they need to take their place within the family of sport."* (Yves Kummer, President of the European Elite Athletes Association, 2011)

Yves Kummer, speaking at the World Athletes Summit, following his reference to David Howman the WADA Director General and Jacques Rogge, the eighth and current President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), stressed the need for athletes to assert their independence. The elected representatives of 150,000 athletes from across the globe voted unanimously to establish a *federation of world player associations* at the World Athletes Summit to champion athletes' rights, hosted by UNI Global Union in Nyon, Switzerland on November 15, 2011. Specifically, representatives of more than 100 player unions gathered at the Summit to ratify the "Nyon Declaration" asserting their status as key stakeholders in world sport. Also speaking at the summit Philip Jennings, General Secretary of UNI Global Union (2011), said: "The players' associations now have a united global voice and the governing sports bodies and governments will have to listen."

The "Nyon Declaration", a landmark in the fight to champion athletes' rights, is a new platform that has been established to tackle the crisis in the governance of world sports organizations. The two key issues that the *federation of world player associations* focused on were the Olympic Athletes Agreement and the reform of the WADA anti-doping rules. Discussions at the summit also included anti-corruption measures, the status of players, collective bargaining, image rights, dual careers/transition programs, the importance of education for athletes and tailored training that will give athletes the chance to fulfill their potential once their playing careers have come to an end.

Walter Palmer, responsible for sport at UNI Global Union (2011), told the participants they will engage with WADA, the IOC and international federations over the unfair Olympic contract and they will support players worldwide with their struggle to be recognized and heard, adding that "we regret that Frank Fredericks, the head of the IOC Athletes Commission, did not choose to respond to our invitation to join the meeting in Nyon." Theo van Seggeln, Secretary General of the International Federation of Football Players Unions argued that "professional sport is global and therefore solutions to the problems we have in sports need to be solved on a global level." (UNI Global Union 2011)

What also needs to be discussed in this platform is the issue of financial fair play. Despite the enormous personal and professional commitment required to engage in a career as a professional athlete, most athletes are modestly paid and have very insecure employment conditions. This platform could also facilitate discussions on the illegal trafficking of minors in football—players aged under 18—with regard to transfers and in particular the abuse and exploitation of minors from outside the EU who are not selected for competitions and abandoned in a foreign country, often in a state of poverty which fosters their further exploitation.

Additionally, what needs to be discussed—and not only in this platform—is integrating a gender perspective. Enabling everyone to realize their full potential, regardless of religion, race, age or politics requires bridging major social inequality gaps which also include the gender participation gap, the gender pay gap and the gender leadership gap in sport.

### **3. Integrating a Gender Perspective**

*"In terms of gender, generally speaking, all over Europe, men participate more often in sports than women."* (Scheerder et al. 2011: 43)

The peace initiatives—examined in the sections that follow—have integrated a gender perspective into their peace education programs, peacemaker projects and activities. All over Europe integrating a gender perspective to enhance sport participation is one of the most prominent targets of sport policy today since research shows that men participate more often in sports than women.

Although remarkable progress has been made since the 1950s, Charlotte Van Tuycom & Jeroen Scheerder (2010), when comparing sport participation based on the European Commission Eurobarometer survey 64.3, found an average gender gap of eight percent in Europe among the 27 member states. A new report by the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (WSFF 2012) reveals the rising gender gap in physical activity between school aged girls and boys today. Additionally, Scheerder, Vandrmeerschen, Van Tuyckom, Hoekman, Breedveld and Vos (2011) identify the gender gap in sport club participation in Europe.

In a comparative analysis on sport participation in 23 countries, based on a fact sheets approach—strong national data and cross-national comparisons—Scheerder et al. (2011) reveal that although sport participation, since the 1990s, has increased in all 23 countries under study and continues to be on the rise in most, it is still socially stratified. The study, a result of intensive cooperation between researchers from the research Unit of Unit of Social Kinesiology & Sport Management, KU Leuven (Belgium), Hedera (Ghent University, Belgium), and the Mulier Institute (the Netherlands) contributes to develop effective policy making and to set realistic targets, at the European as well as the (sub) national level.

According to the results, with regard to monthly sport participation, the gender gap is higher in the southern countries. Moreover, countries with lower levels of sport participation reported larger gender inequalities than countries with high levels of sport

participation. For example, France, Flanders, Switzerland and the Netherlands, having high levels of sport participating, show the lowest gender gap, i.e. less than three percent. Denmark has an even higher level of weekly sport participation for women than for men! More analytically, gender inequality is higher in Italy and Spain. The same is true for Northern Ireland, showing the highest difference in the sport participation level between men and women (more than ten percent) whereas England, Poland and Finland occupy an intermediate position. With regard to weekly sport participation, women surpass men in Denmark. Namely, more women engage in weekly sport activities than their male counterparts. In Finland, Flanders, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland, women are comparatively equal, that is they are more likely to be weekly sport participants: the lowest gender gap (less than three percent). On the other hand, Spain and Northern Ireland have the largest gender gap (over ten percent). A gender gap is also observed in club sport participation, which is the highest in Switzerland and Northern Ireland (13 and 16 percent respectively) while in France and the Netherlands it is the most egalitarian: equally inclusive for both women and men (the gender gap is less than three percent). In Finland, Denmark and Flanders the gender gap is three to five percent, rather low in comparison to Northern Ireland's ten percent.

Schools hold the key to closing the gender gap, reads a recent report by the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (WSFF 2012), based on research carried out by the Institute of Youth Sport at Loughborough University. The WSFF report points out that schools hold the key to encouraging girls to get active and engage in physical exercises. The study included a survey of 1,500 school children to examine their attitudes to fitness and sport. According to the results over half of secondary school girls (51%) in the UK put off sport and physical activity because of their experiences of school sport and physical education. Only 12% of 14 year old girls reach the recommended levels of physical activity, despite the fact that three quarters (74%) of girls say they would like to be more active. Moreover, 45% of girls say "sport is too competitive" and over half believe that boys enjoy competitive sport more than girls do. Over half of all boys and girls agree that "there are more opportunities for boys to succeed in sport than girls." About half of the girls surveyed (48%) say that getting sweaty is "not feminine" and almost a third of the boys surveyed think that girls who are sporty "are not very feminine". Additionally, 43% of girls agree that "there aren't many sporting role models for girls." The WSFF (2012) report also highlights the rising and progressive gender gap between boys and girls during the course of their lives, as they grow up. For example, in primary school (year four) girls and boys carry out similar levels of physical activity, but by the time they reach year six girls perform considerably less exercise than boys – a gap that widens as girls reach year nine of secondary school.

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### **Biographical sketch**

**Irene Kamberidou** is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Athens, the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Science (<http://www.phed.uoa.gr>) where she teaches *Gender Issues and Sport*, *Principles of Sociology* (undergraduate courses) and *Sport Sociology* (graduate course). She received her PhD from the Sociology Department of the Panteios University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens, Greece, her MA from Boston College, Chestnut Hill USA, her BA from Emmanuel College, Boston Massachusetts, USA and completed her junior year abroad at the Sorbonne de l'Université Paris, France. Dr. Kamberidou is a member of the Executive Group of the ECWT- European Centre for Women and Technology (<http://www.womenandtechnology.eu>) and the Greek representative of the International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women (IAPESGW). She is also a member of the Hellenic Sociological Society (HSS), the Panhellenic Union for the Promotion of Women in Sports (PEPGAS) and the International Sport for Development and Peace Association Platform (ISDPA). Dr. Kamberidou –with active participation at international and European conferences, including publications– has also contributed as a gender expert and moderator in many of the European Commission's high-level conferences, meetings, projects and workshops addressing exclusionary practices in the digital age (see public profile in *Women for Smart Growth*: [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/events/cf/daa11/person.cfm?personid=21537](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/events/cf/daa11/person.cfm?personid=21537)) Email: [ikamper@phed.uoa.gr](mailto:ikamper@phed.uoa.gr) and [irene.kamberidou@womenandtechnology.eu](mailto:irene.kamberidou@womenandtechnology.eu)