

Sport and the fight against HIV/AIDS in Zambia: A 'partnership approach'?

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Abstract

Sport is being increasingly recognized for the contribution it can make to the Millennium Development Goals and, in particular, the response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In both sport-for-development and HIV/AIDS sectors, partnerships are advocated as an effective approach to achieving policy goals. This exploratory study examined the nature of partnerships involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that use sport as a tool for HIV/AIDS prevention in Zambia. Sensitized by development literature, the study utilized an inductive, qualitative research approach primarily centred on interviews with key stakeholders from a variety of governmental and non-governmental agencies both based in Zambia and supporting sport-for-development programmes from overseas. A large number of different partnerships were identified by interviewees that varied significantly in terms of their purpose and form. Within the Zambian sport-for-development sector, organizational fragmentation and competition for resources provided by overseas agencies inhibited the development of partnerships aimed at policy co-ordination across the whole sector. Productive bilateral partnerships existed between sport-for-development NGOs and between these organizations and health-based NGOs. However, the sport-development sector lacked integration into more strategic partnerships that addressed HIV/AIDS policy issues. Incremental progress is identified as the key to future improvements in partnerships involving sport-for-development NGOs. Further research that examines how partnerships influence the delivery of programmes within specific communities would also enhance understanding of the contribution of sport to development efforts.

Keywords

HIV/AIDS, NGOs, partnership, sport-for-development

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Introduction

Sport is being increasingly recognized for the contribution it can make to the Millennium Development Goals, one of which is specifically directed towards combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Internationally, there have been a variety of policy initiatives, often led through the United Nations, that have sought to emphasize the potential contribution of sport to development efforts (Beutler, 2008). For example, the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (2003: 5) states that:

Well-designed sports programmes are also a cost-effective way to contribute significantly to health, education, development and peace as a powerful medium through which to mobilize societies as well as communicate key messages.

The same report also highlights the contribution that sport can make to four pillars of effective HIV/AIDS programming, namely knowledge, life skills, the provision of a safe and supportive environment and access to services. In practice, sport has been used in a variety of locations, mainly in the Global South,¹ as a popular and appropriate forum through which information about the virus can be disseminated as well as a tool to encourage personal and social development which, in turn, may reduce the incidence of behaviours that lead to infection (Zakus et al., 2007).

Correspondingly, there has been a rapid increase in the number of organizations associated with, and involved in, the 'sport-for-development' movement (Black, 2010). Within countries in the Global South, locally based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have commonly played a central role in the delivery of sport-for-development programmes. National governments have also contributed to the development of such programmes within specific countries. Furthermore, international support has been provided by organizations from the Global North, including governmental agencies, sporting organizations, charities and private sector organizations (Kidd, 2008).

Given the multitude of organizations involved in sport-for-development, it is unsurprising that there have been common calls for the development of partnerships. For example, the final report on the International Year of Sport and Physical Education instigated by the United Nations in 2005 suggests that:

Local development through sport particularly benefits from an integrated partnership approach to sport for development involving the full spectrum of actors in field-based community development including all levels and various sectors of Government, sports organizations and federations, NGOs and the private sector. (United Nations, 2006: 61)

Similarly, some scholars have begun to recognize the potential value of effective partnerships in enabling sport to make a positive contribution to development. For example, Black (2010: 127) highlights the need for those involved in sport-for-development to 'collaborate much more systematically' not only within the movement itself but also with agencies involved in other aspects of development work.

However, beyond Hayhurst and Frisby's (2010) single article, few authors have specifically focused on, or explicitly addressed, the 'profoundly ambiguous' (Black, 2010: 125) terminology and highly complex dynamics (Guilianotti, 2004) associated with partnerships in sport-for-development.

This lacuna is reinforced by other limitations of the emerging sport-for-development research literature. Much of the literature is characterized by its international perspective (e.g. Beutler, 2008; Kidd, 2008; Levermore, 2008) with Hayhurst and Frisby (2010) recognizing that sport-for-development research has predominantly been based upon the perspectives of actors from the Global North. Therefore, while literature has frequently been critical of Global North influences on sport-for-development, voices of actors from the Global South have yet to be heard significantly in this critique. This weakness is recognized by Hayhurst (2009) who calls for an 'anthropological' approach to further research on international sport-for-development. Such accounts of the use of sport-for-development in Global South contexts are emerging. Whilst extremely valuable, a limitation of these contributions is their specificity in commonly examining particular sport-for-development programmes (e.g. Gasser and Levinsen, 2004; Höglund and Sundberg, 2008; Sugden, 2006) or focusing on individual sport-for-development organizations (e.g. Armstrong, 2004; Coalter, 2007; Fokwang, 2009). A significant exception in this regard is the Norwegian-sponsored review of Zambian components of the international Kicking AIDS Out network undertaken by Kruse (2006).

This study was designed to begin to address the gaps identified in the literature. The specific country chosen for the research was Zambia, one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Zambia was an appropriate context for this study as it has been at the forefront of efforts to utilize sport as a tool for development with Mwaanga's (2002) practical manual, for example, being one of the first of its kind. Moreover, the significance of partnerships to the fight against HIV/AIDS in Zambia has also been highlighted in national policies (National HIV/AIDS Council, 2006). The purpose of the research, therefore, was exploratory in investigating partnerships connected to the use of sport as a tool for HIV/AIDS prevention in Zambia. Avoiding a narrow focus or definition, the research first sought to identify the features of those relationships that sport-for-development stakeholders themselves identified as 'partnerships'. Second, issues important to the development and operation of these partnerships were investigated. The research and the methods employed centred on Zambian NGOs that were the key agencies in delivering sport-for-development programmes. While this aspect of the research design addressed the need for 'local voice', a holistic perspective was maintained by the inclusion in the research process of a variety of other local, national and international actors involved in sport-for-development and HIV/AIDS prevention in Zambia.

Literature review

Given the limitations of the sport-for-development literature, more general development literature was utilized to underpin the research. This section will first trace changes in the prominence and role of NGOs in development efforts. Subsequently,

issues related to the relationships and partnerships between NGOs and other development stakeholders will be examined. Perspectives from sport-for-development sources will be integrated where appropriate.

In the Global South, the period of the 1980s and 1990s witnessed an ‘unprecedented increase’ in the numbers of NGOs which was part of a wider expansion of the role of, what is loosely termed as, ‘civil society’ in development activities (Bebbington and Riddell, 1997; Laird, 2007). One of the main drivers of this expansion was the dominance of neo-liberal ideology amongst Western governments and supranational organizations such as the World Bank which was reinforced by a perception that national governments in African countries were both failing and corrupt (Laird, 2007; Zaidi, 1999). As a result, the expansion of NGOs was supported in international policies based on the hope and expectation that such organizations were effective in enabling aid to reach the poorest members of society (Bebbington and Riddell, 1997; Zaidi, 1999) and were, more generally, ‘vehicles for “democratisation” as essential components of a thriving civil society’ (Hulme and Edwards, 1997: 6).

However, there has been increasing recognition of problematic issues associated with the prominence of NGOs in development activities. In writing about efforts to address HIV/AIDS, Seckinelgin (2005: 360) effectively encapsulates a number of issues identified in a variety of studies examining the contribution of NGOs to development:

Since the number of NGOs dealing with the disease is very large, it is difficult to conclude whether the interventions are coherent or sustainable and whether they will have societal impact. The small size of individual NGOs makes them attractive to donors for their interventions but, in terms of outcomes, the results are fragmented and unsustainable.

Particularly pertinent to the issue of partnership, Webb (2004) also identifies the prevalence of competition between different NGOs. As well as being briefly mentioned by Kidd (2008) and Wilson and Hayhurst (2009), the issue of competition amongst NGOs involved in sport-for-development work is highlighted by Armstrong (2004) who noted the ‘envy’ and resultant ‘exasperation’ amongst sport activists in Liberia.

Partly as a result of these problematic issues, Kidd (2008) along with more mainstream development authors (e.g. Bebbington and Riddell, 1997; Boone and Batsell, 2001; Zaidi, 1999) has suggested that there is a need to strengthen state capacities in countries in the Global South. However, the relationships between NGOs and Global South states have also been subject to criticism especially in literature related to HIV/AIDS. Political competition and lack of resources have weakened relationships and efforts at co-ordination between African states and NGOs (Irunzun-Lopez and Poku, 2005). Adopting a more NGO-focused orientation, both Boone and Batsell (2001) and Seckinelgin (2004) suggest that NGOs remain weak in influencing national and international HIV/AIDS policy frameworks. Only Webb (2004: 23) dissents from this common view suggesting that HIV/AIDS networks established at national and regional levels have allowed NGOs to develop ‘a critical mass to allow representation at political or lobbying levels’.

As well as offering the potential to influence policy, the involvement of NGOs in partnerships may also engender other benefits. More generally, Biggs and Neame (1995: 32) report that:

one of the most significant observations of studies concerning NGO effectiveness has been that networking and coalitions with other NGOs, and with other public and private actors, are often the key to results.

Specifically, in the sport-for-development literature, Black (2010) suggests that collaboration can enhance joint learning while Armstrong (2004) identifies specific examples whereby organizations sharing knowledge and equipment have enhanced development efforts. Hayhurst and Frisby (2010) also note that partnerships involving NGOs are commonly orientated towards obtaining or pooling of financial resources. However, issues such as the fragmentation of the NGO sector and competition for scarce resources have meant that developing effective partnerships between NGOs has been a 'perennial problem' (Laird, 2007). In research on HIV/AIDS programmes in rural sub-Saharan African locations, White and Morton (2005) found that effective relationships between NGOs were 'the exception rather than the norm' (p. 195) and described partnerships between such organizations as 'a crucial and underdeveloped area' (p. 197).

In addition, authors have identified problematic issues in the relationships between international donors and NGOs in the Global South. On the one hand, the increasing use of the term 'partnership' to describe relationships between such agencies represents a 'rhetoric . . . [that] focuses on reversing power relations in the aid chain' (Harrison, 2007: 391). However, different authors suggest that this rhetoric masks the ongoing power that international donors possess in supporting NGOs in the Global South (Laird, 2007; Seckinelgin, 2004), an issue also highlighted in the sport-for-development literature (Gasser and Levinsen, 2004; Hayhurst, 2009). Commonly, authors cite processes related to accountability, such as monitoring and evaluation, as a key mechanism through which the power of international donors is wielded. Such accountability mechanisms are believed to impede co-ordination between NGOs (Biggs and Neame, 1995), create a focus on short-term measurable outputs (Zaidi, 1999) and distance NGOs from the communities in which they work (Hayhurst and Frisby, 2010).

Research methods

This exploratory study adopted a qualitative approach in order to collect in-depth data on the nature of partnerships involving NGOs that use sport as a tool for HIV/AIDS prevention in Zambia (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Utilizing both purposive and snowball sampling (May, 2001), interviews were conducted with a variety of stakeholders involved in sport and HIV/AIDS prevention. Interviewees included representatives of NGOs from both the sport-for-development and HIV/AIDS sectors. Representatives of national bodies including the National HIV/AIDS Council and the Zambian National HIV/AIDS Network as well as the Ministries of Education and Sport, Youth and Child Development were also interviewed. Finally, interviews were conducted with representatives of agencies from the UK, Canada and Norway that supported sport-for-development in Zambia.

The semi-structured interview format used standard questions to conduct interviews both on an individual basis and with small groups of representatives from particular agencies. Sensitized by issues identified in the literature review, interview questions sought to examine the form and nature of partnerships, issues or challenges in partnership working, and also any perceived benefits realized through partnership working. In keeping with the exploratory nature of the research, interviewees were asked to discuss any relationships that they themselves identified or termed as partnerships.

In total, 14 interviews involving 22 individual participants were conducted in September and October 2007. Individual interviewees were senior officials from government and national agencies, directors and managers of NGOs and international development managers representing sporting agencies from the Global North. Each interview lasted between 30 and 80 minutes and was digitally recorded with the consent of the participants. Interview transcripts were analysed through an iterative and inductive process (Fielding and Thomas, 2008). Reflecting the research aims, this process allowed identification of important facets of specific partnerships as well as examination of common themes that permeated different partnerships.

Data from documents and observations was used to triangulate, complement and contextualize the information gained from interviews (Patton, 2002). A review of relevant documents was initially undertaken to understand the HIV/AIDS policy area and to identify key HIV/AIDS agencies in Zambia. Documents such as the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework 2006–2010, provided extensive policy information about partnerships and the multi-sectoral approach adopted in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In addition, observation of a meeting of the Lusaka District AIDS Task Force Stakeholders Forum, where a number of presentations were made by NGOs involved in HIV/AIDS programmes, was used to triangulate and add to data collected from interviews.

The Zambian sport-for-development context and identified partnerships

Findings related to the first purpose of the research, namely identifying the features of those relationships recognized by interviewees as ‘partnerships’, will be presented in this section. In order to contextualize these findings, this section will begin by describing the organizational context of sport-for-development work in Zambia. Following description of the partnerships identified, the section will conclude by identifying characteristics by which these partnerships could be differentiated.

Interviewees with international experience noted the presence in Zambia of a greater number of sport-for-development NGOs than in other countries in the Global South. The research identified various indigenous sport-for-development NGOs, founded and managed by Zambian nationals, some of which operated in communities across Zambia while others were focused on specific communities. Indigenous NGOs operating nationally, such as the EduSport Foundation, Sport in Action and the Breakthrough Sports Academy, were more prominent in specifically using sport to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. Programmes delivered by these organizations commonly combined diversionary elements with delivery of ‘life skills’ education that encouraged broader

behaviour change amongst the young people participating (see Kay et al., 2007, for more detail on these approaches). While such indigenous NGOs were well established in Zambia, transnational NGOs such as Right to Play and SCORE, that had a presence in a number of sub-Saharan countries, also delivered sport-for-development programmes especially in Lusaka, the Zambian capital.

Beyond these NGOs, a variety of other national and international agencies were identified as stakeholders in the Zambian sport-for-development sector. In terms of Zambian agencies of state, the National Sports Council and the Ministry for Sport, Youth and Child Development were those that had specific responsibility for sport. Finally, sport-for-development programmes in Zambia were supported in a variety of ways by sporting agencies from the Global North such as the Norwegian Olympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF), UK Sport and Commonwealth Games Canada. A similar organizational context, albeit on a greater scale, was identified in the HIV/AIDS sector. Both indigenous and transnational NGOs were present in a policy system led by state agencies such as the National HIV/AIDS Council and government departments. Significant international funding was provided, particularly through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Given the organizational pluralism associated with the Zambian sport-for-development sector, it was perhaps unsurprising that interviewees identified a diverse range of relationships that they termed as partnerships. Amongst NGOs specifically, bilateral and informal relationships between two NGOs were the predominant form of partnership. Commonly such partnerships comprised a sport-for-development and a health-based NGO working together to deliver a particular programme or event. Doing so enabled the specific expertise of each organization to be combined as recognized by a representative of a smaller sport-for-development NGO:

For example we can organise football leagues, and we are good at organising football leagues, and we've also got [organizations] which are specialists in HIV/AIDS. So we organise the league, they do the HIV/AIDS [education].

Bilateral partnerships solely between sport-for-development NGOs were less common. However, these NGOs occasionally worked with each other in capacity building efforts, for example in the training of sport-for-development volunteers.

There were different types of partnerships that involved NGOs along with Zambian state agencies. As part of the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework (National HIV/AIDS Council, 2006), six multi-sector, themed working groups were established in order to develop and co-ordinate policy. These partnership groups were formalized in terms of the mode of operation and their membership was fairly closed. No sport-for-development NGOs were members of these partnerships. At a more local level, state agencies were also instrumental in instigating other HIV/AIDS partnership structures including District AIDS Task Force (DATF) Stakeholders Forums. From observation of one meeting of such a forum in Lusaka, these partnerships were more open to a variety of agencies including a large proportion of NGOs. Activities within this type of partnership were largely informal and were directed towards sharing information on effective practice, discussing common challenges and networking. Interviewees from

sport-for-development NGOs indicated that they had yet to build upon their awareness of these broad partnerships by becoming more significantly involved.

Further partnerships were identified involving sport-for-development NGOs and sporting agencies from the Global North. The international Kicking AIDS Out Network included both indigenous and transnational NGOs as well as the three sporting agencies from the Global North identified earlier in the section. This loose alliance of organizations was designed to 'raise awareness about how sport and physical activity programs can be adapted to promote dialogue and education about HIV and AIDS and to facilitate life skills training' (Kicking AIDS Out, 2010). Besides the Kicking AIDS Out Network, more specific partnerships were formed between individual indigenous sport-for-development NGOs and the same sporting agencies from the Global North. Financial support was provided to the sport-for-development NGOs through such partnerships. More reciprocal activities, such as placements for volunteers and staff both in Zambia and in countries in the Global North, were also undertaken through these partnerships.

Overall, a number of characteristics were identified by which this diverse array of identified partnerships could be differentiated. First, the purposes of partnerships spanned a spectrum between those that were of broad strategic importance, such as the themed working groups in the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework, and those that were orientated towards sharing information about development practices. The DATF Stakeholders Forums and the Kicking AIDS Out Network were associated with this later purpose and, in fact, there was little indication as to the extent to which information sharing resulted in changes in practice amongst partnership members. Between the extremes of policy development and co-ordination and dissemination of practice information, a number of other partnership purposes were distinguished. Amongst these purposes were the joint delivery of programmes, the provision and acquisition of funding and capacity building. It is not possible to order these purposes in terms of their importance and it should also be realized that specific partnerships, such as those between sport-for-development NGOs and agencies from the Global North, were designed to fulfil more than one of these purposes. Furthermore, interviewees recognized that it was possible that the purposes of partnerships could change over time, perhaps becoming increasingly orientated to more strategic outcomes.

In addition to the different purposes associated with partnerships, it is important to recognize that the form of identified partnerships varied significantly. In terms of membership, partnerships varied from bilateral relationships between two NGOs to those consisting of a large number of members such as the DATF Stakeholders Forum. This partnership also represented one that was fairly open to a variety of (potential) members. In contrast, the national HIV/AIDS thematic working groups were closed in terms of membership, especially to sport-for-development organizations. The formalization of these thematic working groups also contrasted with the informality of other partnerships, especially those solely comprising NGOs. Finally, partnerships also varied between those that had a relatively even balance of power between members and those in which certain members were significantly more powerful than others. While partnerships between NGOs were exemplar of the former type, it was apparent that, reflecting the broader literature (e.g. Hayhurst, 2009; Seckinelgin, 2004), state agencies and sporting

agencies from the Global North had the capacity to exercise greater power when in partnerships with indigenous NGOs.

While not representing a formal schema for classification of partnerships, the identification of the different partnership dimensions is important in beginning to address Black's (2010) criticism regarding the ambiguity of partnership terminology. Moreover, this analysis is useful in contextualizing the findings presented in the following two sections. Both of these sections examine issues that affect partnership working. The first of these two sections will consider partnerships specifically within the sport-for-development sector with those partnerships that linked the sport-for-development and HIV/AIDS sectors being the focus of the subsequent section.

Partnership issues within the sport-for-development sector

As has been identified in other studies centred on NGOs (e.g. Laird, 2007), the development of effective partnerships within the Zambian sport-for-development sector was hindered by the high number of organizational stakeholders. There were no partnerships that encompassed the entire range of agencies involved in sport-for-development or that encouraged co-ordination of policy and practice in the sector. In this regard, the loose and international nature of the Kicking AIDS Out network meant it appeared to have greater influence within individual organizations rather than across the Zambian sport-for-development sector. Previously, a Zambia-specific Kicking AIDS Out Alliance had existed as a forum for co-ordination although this network had been discontinued due to 'relationship disintegration', 'mistrust' and 'bickering' between NGO members (similarly identified by Kruse, 2006). The fragmentation of, and lack of co-ordination across, the sport-for-development sector led to 'segmentation of our actions' (Director, Sport-for-Development NGO) and duplication, as a representative of a sporting agency from the Global North observed: 'I do see [NGOs] working in the same communities, with very similar objectives and very similar programmes.' A replacement for the Kicking AIDS Out Alliance, the Sport-for-Development and Physical Education Network, was only starting to become established at the time the research was conducted. As a result, the initial purpose of this network was mainly to provide a forum for sharing of information on sport-for-development practices and experiences.

Due to the lack of an integrated partnership for the entire sport-for-development sector, the majority of partnerships that were identified by interviewees tended to operate between a small number of members. Although relationships between some of the larger NGOs were described as being poor (but improving), capacity-building partnerships existed between larger and smaller sport-for-development NGOs. For one sport-for-development NGO, their status as a larger, longer-established organization meant that engendering such benefits through partnerships was seen as their duty:

We had the privilege to be [one of the first] NGOs in this sector. And we understood that with that privilege there comes a responsibility of bringing up other smaller organisations or even bigger organisations elsewhere but they don't operate here and they don't have the skills and the know how of how certain sectors operate. We had to make sure that we interact with them and bring them up.

This capacity building support was also recognized by a representative of a smaller sport-for-development NGO who valued the opportunities to access volunteer training workshops that were organized by a larger sport-for-development NGO. Besides training, other forms of capacity building support identified by interviewees involved the provision of equipment and identification of potential funders.

Besides relationships between Zambian sport-for-development NGOs, efforts had been made to improve the partnerships between these organizations and sporting agencies from the Global North through which financial support was provided. These efforts consisted of the three key sporting agencies from Norway, Canada and the United Kingdom working together collectively, rather than individually, to fund sport-for-development programmes in Zambia. However, problematic issues in the partnerships between sporting agencies from the Global North and Zambian sport-for-development NGOs were identified, particularly by representatives of the later organizations. One interviewee hinted at cross-cultural difficulties in approaches to partnership interaction:

So maybe it's for our partners in the North or anywhere else maybe should have also invested in building relationships [with us in the Global South]. They have been so mechanical in their approach to the partnerships. I think if they come in with the human interactive approach . . . it is very important. If they want this sector to have stronger partnerships, to have more effective partnerships, they really have to re-orientate themselves.

Such cross-cultural difficulties in partnership working are rarely mentioned explicitly in the literature. In addition, reinforcing Hayhurst and Frisby's findings (2010), an interviewee from an indigenous NGO argued that agencies from the Global North used funding to tie Zambian sport-for-development NGOs to their own agendas and identified the breakdown of one particular relationship where this power had been questioned.

Irrespective of power imbalances, the significant presence of international funding within the sector created tensions between Zambian sport-for-development NGOs which undermined attempts to develop effective partnerships. As identified more widely in the literature and specifically in the Zambian context by Kruse (2006), the prevalence of international funding engendered competition between sport-for-development NGOs, as an interviewee from one of these organizations recognized:

you feel sometimes you are competing for the same resources, we are competing for the same target, we are competing for the same consequences, so you find that most of the time there is some kind of competition among the groups that are involved.

For one representative of a sporting agency from the Global North, competition for funding between indigenous NGOs was a contributing factor to the breakdown of the local Kicking AIDS Out Alliance.

The existence of competition serves to emphasize the importance of Sugden's (2006: 238) recognition that maintaining a 'stance of impartiality/neutrality' represents a significant challenge for international agencies. Despite attempts by the sporting agencies from the Global North to address problems associated with competition by developing a collective approach to funding, the need to garner their own resources

remained a strong imperative for individual sport-for-development NGOs, as the following quote demonstrates:

Maybe it would be better if we collaborated on projects whilst we also keep our individual advantages, because we don't want to lose certain individual advantages. (Director, Sport-for-Development NGO)

As Boone and Batsell (2001) and other authors identify, the development of state capacities may enable greater co-ordination of the efforts of NGOs. However, the Ministry for Sport, Youth & Child Development appeared to play a limited role in the sport-for-development sector. Until relatively recently, governmental and national sport policies, which the sport-for-development NGOs had input into, had focused on the development of sport to a greater extent than the use of sport as a development tool (Kruse, 2006). Moreover, supporting Webb's (2004) view that direct contacts between African governments and NGOs are frequently limited, there was also evidence that communication between the government ministry and sport-for-development NGOs was often lacking.

Despite these problems, interviewees did recognize the need for improved partnership within the sport-for-development sector and hinted at ways in which this improvement could be achieved. First, the importance of human skills and capacity as a requisite of effective partnerships was recognized. Reflecting on the dissolution of the Zambian Kicking AIDS Out Alliance, one interviewee stated that 'we don't know how to manage this partnership – it is not that we don't want it'. Improved management of partnerships required not only the devotion of time from NGO staff, but also the development of new skills as one interviewee recognized the need 'to change and reorient people's minds for trust, on communication, you know conflict and resolution, management of risk'. Second, interviewees identified a need for members to continually derive benefits from their involvement in partnerships. Conversely, one interviewee from a sport-for-development NGO, reflecting on the disbanded Kicking AIDS Out Alliance, recognized the negative implications if benefits were not drawn from partnerships:

when things don't come people's way, as they expected, when their expectations are not actually met, then things begin to disintegrate.

Partnership issues between sport-for-development and HIV/AIDS sectors

As stated previously, bilateral relationships between sport-for-development NGOs and health-based NGOs represented the most common type of partnerships across the sport-for-development and HIV/AIDS sectors. These partnerships helped the sport-for-development NGOs to 'transcend the myth of autonomy' that Black (2010: 127) believes affects the movement more generally. Of the different purposes identified earlier in the article, partnerships between sport-for-development and health NGOs were orientated towards capacity building and joint delivery. Capacity building relationships with

health-based NGOs were particularly important when sport-for-development NGOs were initially founded. For example, an interviewee from one of the more established sport-for-development NGOs commented that:

... when we came in as sporting institutions, we lacked competencies in HIV and AIDS only. We were good with sport. So we needed to be good for both. And this is where people who have already developed tools and approaches for HIV and AIDS education, we had to partner with them and they trained us.

As sport-for development NGOs became more established over time, partnerships with health-based NGOs became more focused on joint delivery and thus became more reciprocal. Sport-for-development NGOs were engaged in joint delivery of school-based programmes or events such as World AIDS Day with health-based NGOs. Similarly, the expertise of specialized health-based NGOs was used to enhance the HIV/AIDS education component of sport-for-development NGOs activities. Interviewees from health-based NGOs recognized the attraction of sporting activities to young people as well as the use of sport as a tool for HIV/AIDS education. Partnership working, therefore, led to increased recognition of the role of sport as a tool for development amongst health-based NGOs and, more generally, increased the 'legitimacy of the sport for development movement' (Hayhurst and Frisby, 2010: 91). Moreover, it could be suggested that the combination of sport and health-orientated skills secured through these partnerships represented the multi-faceted approach to HIV/AIDS prevention advocated by White and Morton (2005).

Although health-based NGOs increasingly recognized the development potential of sport, sport-for-development NGOs were, as Kruse (2006) previously identified, less integrated into broader partnership that were designed to address HIV/AIDS structures at both national and local levels. As noted earlier, sport-for-development NGOs and the sector as a whole were not members of the strategic Thematic Working Groups that formed part of the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework (National HIV/AIDS Council, 2006) despite their alignment with the Prevention Theme in particular. By contrast, and reflecting Webb's (2004) more general finding, some health-based NGOs were well established and influenced policy within these Thematic Working Groups. The absence of sport-for-development NGOs from the Thematic Working Groups, as well as the DATF Stakeholders Forums, limited the extent to which they were involved in discussions regarding important aspects of HIV/AIDS policy and practice.

Interviewees from sport-for-development NGOs believed that their lack of integration into HIV/AIDS partnership structures was partly due to a lack of understanding of the sector as a whole by national HIV/AIDS policy actors. One of the interviewees from a sport-for-development NGO commented that this attitude towards the sector was due to the prevalence of a 'traditionalist' view of sport as being merely 'play activities' lacking any form of seriousness:

... so we lose out sometimes through that because of those definitions and a lack of understanding towards what role of sport, if we are called [a sporting organization]. We still have a challenge;

we still have to do a lot of sensitization [to make people aware of the role that sport can play in HIV/AIDS prevention].

The lack of understanding of the sport-for-development sector demonstrated by policy-makers and other key agencies within the national HIV/AIDS partnership structure appeared to represent a paradox in that it impeded the integration of sport-for-development NGOs into those national HIV/AIDS partnership structures in which advocacy work could lead to increased recognition and understanding of the sector as a whole.

Also impeding the full integration and recognition of the sport-for-development sector was the lack of alignment between the programme outcomes of sport-for-development NGOs and those identified within the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework. As Seckinelgin (2004) identifies in other countries, the Zambian national HIV/AIDS targets and monitoring were based upon measurable, quantitative outputs. National HIV/AIDS agencies demanded quantitative results, for example, the number of condoms distributed or number of individuals undergoing voluntary counselling and testing for HIV/AIDS, from organizations working in the HIV/AIDS sector as a criteria for funding. However, sport-for-development NGOs tended to focus on more nebulous outcomes in the form of personal and social development which were harder to measure quantitatively (Kay, 2009). Such qualitative outcomes appeared to be those that satisfied the criteria of sporting agencies from the Global North, the key funders of the sport-for-development NGOs. There were no demands by these key funders for recipient organizations to align their programme objectives to those set by the National HIV/AIDS Council. More broadly, interviewees representing sporting agencies from the Global North recognized their own lack of familiarity with the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework.

As a result, the expected outcomes of HIV/AIDS programmes delivered by the local sport-for-development NGOs were also different to those demanded by the Zambian National AIDS Network in disbursing Global Funds to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The fact that only one sport-for-development NGO had received funding from this source was both a result and indicative of the mismatch in the types of outcomes desired. Moreover, despite some health-based NGOs recognizing the role that sport could play in the fight against HIV/AIDS, there were fewer partnerships between sport-for-development NGOs and health-based NGOs that were orientated towards accessing available funding. Indeed, it was only in a single instance that a joint funding application was successful between a large sport-for-development NGO and a health-based NGO.

Conclusions

Policy and practice

As well as being a prominent component of the multi-sectoral approach to combating HIV/AIDS identified in national policies, partnerships were recognized as highly important by the sport-for-development NGOs that were at the centre of this study. Partnerships involving NGOs within the sport-for-development sector and between sport-for-development and health-based NGOs were, in the main, informal and orientated towards practice-related purposes. Conversely, at the time the research was undertaken, there

were no partnerships with more strategic policy development and co-ordination purposes within the sport-for-development sector. Moreover, unlike some health-based NGOs, sport-for-development NGOs were not integrated into the formalized and closed partnerships that were integral to national HIV/AIDS policy development and co-ordination. As a result, sport-for-development NGOs may not, as yet, be in a position to realize the full scale of benefits that could be derived from partnership working.

The evidence points to the interrelated nature of the partnership issues identified in the previous paragraph. It could be suggested that the capacity for the sport-for-development sector to advocate effectively on its own behalf within HIV/AIDS policy arenas was weakened by the sector lacking a single unified voice due to the challenges that sport-for-development NGOs have encountered in working in partnership together. Instead, within the sport-for-development sector there was evidence of duplication of effort and a degree of competition among sector members. The existence of such problems is perhaps unsurprising given the relatively recent emergence of sport-for-development both as a general concept and as a practice developed by the Zambian NGOs. Similar partnership issues have often been identified in sectors that have been established over a far longer period (Lorgan, 1998; Webb, 2004).

More positively, however, the findings of the study point to potential ways in which partnership problems facing sport-for-development NGOs may be addressed. A positive example of progress was the development of relationships between sport-for-development and health-based NGOs from being largely orientated towards one-way capacity building to stronger, more reciprocal partnerships encompassing a wider variety of purposes. This example links with Huxham and Vangen's (2005) belief that partnerships can evolve cyclically and, in doing so, can incrementally work towards the generation of more substantial benefits. In contrast, Kruse (2006) suggested that initial aspirations for partnership within the Zambian sport-for-development sector were too ambitious. In developing partnerships within the sport-for-development sector over time, NGOs would be advised to take a longer-term approach which continually provides benefits for all parties. Similarly, in working towards greater integration into the HIV/AIDS sector, sport-for-development NGOs may initially look to involvement in the more open DATF Stakeholders Forums as a route to gaining access to more closed partnerships orientated towards HIV/AIDS policy development and co-ordination.

Beyond the sport-for-development NGOs, other agencies may have a role in encouraging improved partnerships. Although sporting agencies from the Global North had taken measures to co-ordinate their own funding streams, funding mechanisms could be improved further to encourage partnerships between sport-for-development NGOs. Initial steps could utilize funding to encourage collaborative delivery in particular themes where there is overlap in the work of different sport-for-development NGOs, for example girl empowerment programmes. In terms of partnership with the HIV/AIDS sector, greater awareness of the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework amongst sporting agencies from the Global North could also allow Zambian sport-for-development NGOs more scope to positively align their programmes with national policy goals. Finally, as suggested in the literature, the involvement of the state could enable improvements in NGO development. Recent policy developments in Zambia show increased

government recognition of the sport-for-development sector (Banda, 2010). Perhaps a greater governmental steer could support improved partnership within the sport-for-development sector and integration with the HIV/AIDS sector.

Future theoretical and research development

In the introduction to this article, the case was made that this study represented a specific contribution to the emerging sport-for-development literature. On the other hand, the study also sits within a wider literature on NGOs in development and, to some degree, the consideration of partnerships more generally. This confluence of different literature allows a number of comments to be made both about the theoretical relevance of this study and avenues for future research.

For practitioners, partnership working appears to have no less relevance in the context of sport-for-development in Zambia than it does in other policy fields in which NGOs operate or, indeed, in the delivery of services in the Global North. That very different types of relationships were identified by interviewees as partnerships reinforces Black's (2010) comments regarding the ambiguity of the term. However, it could be argued that imposing a specific but potentially arbitrary definition of partnership from the outset of this study would have weakened the exposition of interrelated issues across the sport-for-development and HIV/AIDS sectors. Moreover, and importantly for future research, it was important to be sensitive to any potential cultural differences amongst practitioners' definitions of partnership. The approach taken in this study of identifying similar and different characteristics of partnerships was, therefore, particularly suited to the exploratory nature of the research. It is also an approach to be recommended in future research given that more detailed classificatory frameworks of partnerships are yet to emerge in the NGO literature, let alone in the field of sport-for-development.

Beginning a process of classification may actually enhance the important objective of using research to improve the design and operation of the variety of relationships that are termed as partnerships. Other research issues also need to be addressed if such an improvement in partnership working is to be realized. This study examined the nature of, and issues regarding, partnerships between agencies involved in sport-for-development and HIV/AIDS. While this focus has allowed some implications for policy and practice to be drawn, it was not possible to fully consider the effects of the identified partnerships. As Houlihan and Lindsey (2008) recognize, drawing causal links between partnerships and outcomes, in this case prevention of HIV/AIDS, is methodologically challenging. However, an initial and important step would be to examine how partnerships involving sport-for-development agencies influence the delivery of specific programmes. Such research would require ongoing engagement within the local communities that are the ultimate target of sport-for-development efforts. It is also suggested that this type of research approach, orientated towards gaining a greater understanding of local perspectives, is one that would be beneficial to addressing a number of different research issues in the field of sport-for-development. The potential contribution of sport to addressing significant social and developmental issues in Zambia and elsewhere means that such research is vitally important.

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Note

1. There are a variety of, often contentious, terminologies used in the context of international development. While not being entirely accurate geographically, the terms 'Global South' and 'Global North' will be used in this article to signify the broad sweep of countries that could be classified as having respectively lesser and greater overall income into their economies.

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