

Movement, games and sport in psychosocial intervention: a critical discussion of its potential and limitations within cooperation for development

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This article critically discusses the use of movement, games and sport in cooperation for development, in post conflict rehabilitation and in the context of violence, disaster and conflict. Pointing out the ambivalent nature of sport and its limitations, we conclude that, if we really want to achieve an impact through movement, games and sport, we should use them as tools with concrete strategies according to specific goals, local context and based on the interests, needs and leadership of the participants. In addition, we argue that in psychosocial intervention, sport is even more powerful combined with other movement, educational or therapeutic methods, and interventions. In spite of a few interesting evaluation and research projects, which we discuss briefly in this article, we still generally lack knowledge about the effects of the applied strategies. Nevertheless, we conclude that there are some possible key factors and basic aspects to contribute to the development of pertinent and effective projects using the potential of movement, games and sport in psychosocial interventions within cooperation for development. We also highlight the importance of the relationship with, and between, the participants and the active, dynamic and participatory character of the intervention.

Keywords: movement, games, sport, cooperation for development, psychosocial intervention, education, rehabilitation, therapy, conflict, disaster, trauma, violence

Introduction

Although movement, games and sports, in one way or another, are part of everyone's life and popular all over the world, their potential to foster not only physical wellbeing, but also psychological and social resources is (still) little recognised. Few projects are using these tools within cooperation for development to foster psychosocial wellbeing. Nevertheless, we see that in most cultures play takes an important role in social life. We do not only refer to children playing, but also to adults' social gatherings, for example: football matches, both as players or as spectators; or when sports and games are played at special feasts, or as cultural events. Another example, in Guatemala, the 'Mayan ball game' (*juego de pelota maya*) integrates a high range of cultural meanings and its social-cultural importance goes further than a simple meeting or game playing. Other than traditional games and sports, football, for example, has achieved a social and commercial dimension that mobilises young and old all over the world, even in the most remote areas.

This article looks at how movement, games and sport are used as tools in psychosocial intervention, within cooperation for development. The goal is not the development of sport, but the promotion of psychosocial

wellbeing through the means of movement, games and sport.

Movement, games and sports in cooperation for development

The use of movement, games and sport occurs more and more frequently in cooperation for development. However, among movement, games and sport, it is especially sport that gets major consideration in development projects, with a strong domination of football. Most of the declarations about sport, from: United Nations bodies (UN, 2003), from politicians, or from nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) working in the field [Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG), 2008], and conclusions of diverse international conferences about sport in cooperation for development (Maglingen Conferences and the Next Step conferences), proclaim sport is an extraordinary, and especially efficient tool, in cooperation for development.

Taking a closer look, most of these affirmations are made without any scientific proof or specific coherent foundation. Moreover, some are politically aimed at advocating for sport, in order to justify the own actions, to get funds, or to acquire more personal or institutional recognition. Consequently, several authors express their doubts regarding the proclaimed universal use and benefit of sport (Coalter, 2007; Giulianotti, 2004; Keim, 2003; Kidd, 2008; Kvalsund, 2005; Ley, 2009; Rato Barrio, 2009; van Eekeren, 2006).

Analysing the contents of the projects, the authors observe that a large number of projects reduce their activities to a simple donation of equipment, the construction of some sports facilities or celebrating a special event, game or tournament. Long term strategies, which might guarantee the

sustainability of the activities and benefits, are mostly absent. Among the sports, football clearly dominates. The populations who benefit are young men and children especially, excluding primarily both the older population and women. Furthermore, the authors found very ambitiously formulated goals, without a clear description of how to achieve them. Proposals of concrete strategies and specific methodology regarding the goals are missing. Some NGOs are reproducing the same strategies, in all different contexts, without adaptation to specific goals and local circumstances. In addition, critical reflection about one's own projects and strategies is almost absent. Finally, only a very small number of projects are evaluated. Furthermore, not only is evaluation lacking, but also quality in evaluation is lacking (Keim, 2003; Lauff, Meulders, & Maguire, 2008).

Nevertheless, the authors have also found quite a number of interesting and *good practice*' projects (see: Beyond Sport, 2009; Gschwend & Selvaraju, 2007; International Council of Sport Sciences and Physical Education (ICSSPE), 2008; Kidd & MacDonnell, 2007; Kvalsund, 2005; SDP IWG, 2008). These projects have some points in common; for example, they all use sport as a tool and combine it with other activities, including mainly pedagogical methodologies. They define specific strategies based on the local context and follow concrete goals. In the case of the project *'Kicking Aids Out'* (Mwaanga, n.d.), they use games to raise awareness about HIV-infection, *'putting'* educational messages into the games and speaking afterwards about the themes. In the research and development project *'Psychosocial, communitarian and intercultural action in Guatemalan post-conflict context'* (Ley, 2009), movement, games and sports were used to facilitate specific life experiences

(prejudices, discrimination, trust, cooperation, security, etc.), which provided the opportunity initiation to reflect on these experiences, to express them and to actively search alternatives. Participatory activities were used to avoid imposing opinions from 'outside' and to foster personally significant experiences and solutions. Among the different strategies that the internationally awarded Kenyan organisation 'MUSA' (Mathare Youth Sports Association) is using, is a football league where teams can also get points through community or social work, such as cleaning up their townships.

In terms of this, it must be questioned if the positive effects of sport projects, like an increase of self esteem or identity building, are actually caused by sport itself, or whether other correlates, like human relationships, in fact might be the responsible factors for change. Indeed, sport can be a very good vehicle, if it is used appropriately, and if it is significant in the local context. In the case of MUSA, football is very pertinent: it is very popular among the young people, it doesn't require huge funding, and you can play it nearly everywhere. It is a local initiative based on the motivations, interests and possibilities of youth, using sport as a tool and connecting it with other social and educational activities (Hognestad & Tollisen, 2004).

In South Africa, sport is promoted as a tool for social integration, but this might only be effective under certain conditions (Keim, 2003). Apart from obvious obstacles such as inadequate infrastructure, other factors can also have a negative influence, such as fear of rejection and isolation in collective sports, poor physical condition of participants from disadvantaged groups, limited awareness about sports as a leisure activity, and the disadvantaged position of women. Dance and team sports seem to be more effective as a

tool for social integration than individual sports (Keim, 2003).

In some cases, sport even can be negative and destructive, for example, promoting unsocial behaviour, like cheating, exaggerated rivalries, violence, injuries, or even sudden cardiac death. Sport projects can also be quiet exclusive, and sometimes the most vulnerable populations are not included as they might not show interest in sports, do not have the abilities nor the physical condition to practise sports, or cannot overcome other barriers for participation. Nevertheless, physical activity can be adapted to different target groups, as the 'sport for all' movement, integrative sport concepts, adapted physical activity or movement, and sports therapy show. Therefore, it is important to adapt the programme to the target group, and to include other kinds of movement, games and modified sports. Projects must be based on the target groups' interests, motivations, leadership, possibilities and capacities. If this is not done, sport projects might only include people with certain characteristics, such as: extroverted, motivated, integrated, sociable, etc., and with certain life conditions, such as: flexible time disposal, basic needs covered, etc.

The negative side of sport is not always visible on the sports ground. On the one hand, the most dissatisfied or discriminated population may not show interest, or cannot participate. On the other hand, mainly people interested in it, consequently achieving mainly positive effects, value sport. We should bear that in mind when planning and evaluating projects. It should be treated as other projects; independent of which tool you use, with the awareness that those who are 'in' might show only one side of the effects, mostly the positive side.

Another aspect to discuss is the utilisation of traditional games and sports as an

alternative to the merely 'modern' sports orientated projects. Although, the two 'systems' can be developed at the same time, and both can be enriching, there exists a danger of 'cultural exportation' (Digel & Fornoff, 1989), or 'neo-colonisation' (Giulianotti, 2004), when modern sports projects endanger destroying traditional structures. It is also important to note that most studies have been made in western countries and/or by researchers from western cultural backgrounds. Studies made in non-western contexts would be very enriching, not only for a better understanding of the local contexts, but also to critically question western concepts. In the same way, we should critically reflect on the promotion of traditional games outside of their traditional setting and their social-cultural meaning (Digel & Fornoff, 1989).

Movement, games and sport in post conflict rehabilitation

The existing scientific literature, as well as evaluation of projects, which use sport as a tool in post conflict rehabilitation are rare. Some projects use high level professional sports, like a benefit football match with famous players or teams, to show their good intentions and willingness to fight for peace. These matches are likely to be more for political or commercial benefit of the organisers or participating teams, than for the conflict affected population. Perhaps it might offer a distraction for 90 minutes, or even it might have a short term symbolic meaning calling for peace, but it can hardly be expected that there will be any crucial influence on the conflict, or post conflict situation.

Critical reflection on how to use sport in conflict and post conflict situations is sorely needed, and the 'do no harm' principle is especially important within these contexts

(Ley, 2009). For example, the organisation of 'friendship' games between two teams of groups in conflict has had counter-productive results in several cases, as the rivalry of the conflict also appeared on and around the sports field. The alternative of mixing teams appears to be more favourable, so that players from the different groups in conflict have to cooperate in the same team and 'fight' together for the same goal (Rato Barrio, 2009; Sugden, 2006).

Indeed, sport can have both, positive and negative effects. In the Kakuma refugee camp in northern Kenya, sports and recreational activities boosted the motivation of refugees in the formation centres of the Salesians of Don Bosco and reduced the drop out rate in professional training (Ley & Rato Barrio, 2007). They were used, together with educational activities and leadership training, to bring people together, to learn to resolve conflicts and to promote peace. The experiences and capacities gained during these activities might also help the refugees in a peaceful reconstruction of their home countries once they are able to return. One of the responsible organisers of the activities said:

'We are with them, we play with them. Once you have played with a boy you know him better, he really shows himself in the field. He cannot hide, because it is something natural, which comes out of him, and then, we help him to grow. Even, when we talk about conflict resolution for example, it is true that even conflicts can take place in the sport field, it can turn into fighting, but when we are presented with them there, it is not so easy for them to be involved in fighting, drugs, etc. (. . .). They become, more and more, friends. They come to play around football and actually it becomes more and more, a social gathering and then slowly, slowly the conversion

takes place. (. . .) We always insist that the teacher is with them, not only observing, but also playing with them' (Ley & Rato Barrio, 2007).

This connection of sport and recreation with educational activities and informal counselling 'as friends' on the playground is very typical of Don Bosco, founder of the Salesians community and characterises the Salesians' work nowadays. In the same refugee camp, a sports coordinator the Kakuma Sports Organization remarked;

'I think we've had remarkable improvements. If you compare the kind of violence we used to have years ago and what we have now. . . . The committees now tolerate each other more. We have very few incidences arising from matches compared with 2001. 2001 we always had fights, every big tournament we had ended up in fights. . . and the fights were not only limited to the field, it spread over into the community. In 2001, we had one group fighting against another group and I think that three people died, but the problem started off in a football field' (Ley & Rato Barrio, 2007).

This shows both the tough situation in the refugee camp and, that sport does not always have a positive impact.

Golombiao, a project in Colombia, is using football as a peace game, and introducing special rules (*Golombiao*, 2005), listed below:

- In each team, there must be a minimum of four players of each sex, and a minimum of two players of each sex must play at the same time.
- At the beginning of each game, they decide on a motto together. It can be a few words to promote reconciliation,

integration, understanding, education, gender perspective, etc.

- There is no referee, only an assessor, who supports the players in defining and putting into practise the norms and rules they themselves discuss, and agree on, before the match starts.
- The final score is not determined by the number of goals only. At the end of each match, the players analyse and evaluate both the personal and the football performance. Consequently, points are given or reduced regarding participation, punctuality, enthusiasm, fair play, etc.

It is supposed that everyone can participate (*UNICEF*, 2005), or, at least there is no clear description of who is participating and who is not. *Golombiao* (2005) offered statistics (including figures) about the distribution of activities, which showed large regional differences in the participation of youth and assessors (volunteers), and in the number of matches. However, the authors could not find any evaluation of the activities, or an analysis of the project's impact on peace building. Furthermore, there appeared to be only positive statements, such as;

'Since the moment when the first ball started to move, beginning of 2004, more than 19 000 male and female players have participated. Apart from wearing a uniform, representing a team and playing a match, the participants had a motive for the families to gather together in peace, the villages showed up in joy and the entrusted institutions conditioned 86 playgrounds and spaces where the events took place' UNICEF (2005).

In spite of the impression of a well designed project with ideas of concrete strategies (like introducing specific rules), the authors could

not find evidence or critical reflections on the impact of the project. Of special interest would have been to show if it reached out to the most affected and disadvantaged population, if for example, people with less football ability participated, how long was participation, how problems on the playground were solved among the teams, etc. The *Open Fun Football Schools* (OFFS) aimed to reintegrate divided communities in the post conflict context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and then spread to Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia and Georgia. Football, in combination with other games and movement exercises, were used to promote confidence, different abilities and teamwork. Therefore, in these holiday schools, boys and girls of mainly between eight and 14 years, from different ethnic groups, different regions and different levels of abilities were joining together in mixed teams (Kvalsund, Nyheim, & Telford, 2004). Based on their *'subjective evaluation'* (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004), they affirmed a complete success of the programme, explaining that the mere functioning of the programme in such a desolate and destroyed situation is already a big success, and that maybe the fun of the children is not quantifiable, but it is real, and in the OFFS you can feel it. In spite of lacking a more rigorous and deeper evaluation regarding the achievement of the formulated goals (such as reintegration, increase of confidence, abilities, teamwork, etc.), the programme seems to be well addressed to the needs of the children and to the complex circumstances of post conflict rehabilitation, and to have achieved the goal of different groups playing joyfully together, using specific strategies, such as ethnically mixed teams. Qualitative research by Armstrong (2004a, 2004b) showed that neighbourhood football teams and their trainers can play an import-

ant role in the reconciliation process in Liberia, as both reporters of child abuse, and acting as a form of family.

'The rewards for inclusion were more social than financial, as only travelling expenses were ever paid. But in a society of displaced people the squad was a surrogate family and a resource network for many' (Armstrong, 2004a).

Working together with outreach workers of Don Bosco, football training and tournaments were combined with awareness activities, such as: talks about child rights, HIV-prevention and the importance of going to school. *'But football could not save everybody in Liberia'*, is Armstrong's (2004b) expression that sport cannot solve all the problems and *'the good work of the Bosco project went up in flames'* when violence rose up again in Liberia in summer of 2003. He indicated that 40% of the combats were children – the target group of the Don Bosco projects;

'Football by itself cannot possibly solve the multifarious problems that Liberia currently faces, but in some cases the game might offer in a variety of ways a useful form of mediation. Certainly, from the work being done via the BUSA football club and Father Joe's community teams, children in danger are being rescued from their appalling predicaments and in such instances the game can be said to have saved lives' (Armstrong, 2004a).

Finally:

'the best that football can claim to be able to offer is an avenue to better health, lessons on morality, the sacrifices teamwork requires, the need of charity and selflessness, and

generally offer itself as a workable metaphor'
(Armstrong, 2004b).

In a personal interview with Armstrong (2 August 2005, Brunel University, West London) we raised the question, if the aforementioned positive effects might be completely destroyed, or if some acquired knowledge or ability might survive, and this could be considered as a long term effect in spite of the breakout of violence. He answered that he would like to believe that the effects survive, but he doubts it, as we should consider that the same children who participated in the teams, had to fight in the conflict, got displaced and some of them probably died. He added that it would be very interesting to evaluate and to follow up what happened to the children who played in the football teams. Such critical reflection is needed to improve action and to accurately reflect reality.

In the Guatemalan context of post conflict rehabilitation, Rato Barrio (2009) developed and evaluated an intercultural programme, using sports, games, movement exercises and participatory techniques to promote intercultural capital among the participants of different ethnic groups. The intervention and research were based on a physical-sportive adaptation and integration of two models advanced by the anthropologist Giménez Romero and the social psychologist Cohen-Emerique (Rato Barrio, 2009). As a doctoral thesis, this research has been approached via multiple case studies, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques, to triangulate the obtained data, using as verification sources tools such as questionnaires, sociometric tests (statistical study of relationships and preferences within social groups), field diaries of the participants and researchers involved, audiovisual material, projective techniques, etc. Under-

taking several testing phases in the four intervention groups (100 regular participants) and in a control group (557 participants), significant improvements in two of the four scales of the questionnaire about the attitudes towards diversity in Guatemala were found. These scales measure the affective, cognitive and behavioural elements of tolerance. In addition, a positive change was observed in indicators such as: a decrease in prejudices, increased knowledge and better understanding of the other participating cultural groups, the building of an atmosphere of trust between them, the value of diversity as something positive and enriching, and the cooperation and positive interaction between the participants from different cultural groups. On the other hand, a tendency was found towards a positive change in other indicators/categories such as: an increase in awareness about the convergences that exist between the different cultural groups in Guatemala, respect towards others, the ability for self analysis, and the improvement of communication and conflict resolution skills (Rato Barrio, 2009).

In the Guatemalan context, the history of racism and discrimination, was suffered particularly by the Mayan population, and has been put behind them in its most historically brutal and overt forms (for example, the systematic massacres in the 1980s during the civil war), however it still exists in more subtle forms. For this reason, it seems likely that better results could be obtained over a longer period of time, at least regarding a deep change in attitude and awareness that would enable each person to make more positive assessments of cultural diversity, while steadily increasing positive interaction between the different cultural groups in a process that should end up in an acceptable degree of peaceful living together (Rato

Barrio, 2009). Therefore, programmes must be implemented with a long term perspective.

Movement, games and sport in psychosocial intervention in context of violence, disaster and conflict

'Sport and physical activity programmes must be planned to meet specific psychosocial goals and adapted to needs of individuals and communities in a specific disaster affected region' (ICSSPE, 2008).

The authors did find some projects that use concrete strategies in the diverse contexts of natural and man-made disasters, as well as some handbooks or toolkits that try to systematise experiences and intervention principles. However, there is a huge lack of evaluation and research that contribute evidence and knowledge, and offer more scientific fundamentals for these projects and handbooks.

The project *'Sports and Play for Traumatized Children and Youth'*, after the earthquake in Bam (Iran), showed some improvements of physical and mental wellbeing, using reports written especially by the trainers, some interviews and further data from other research. It was not possible to isolate the intrinsic impact of sport, moreover, as key factors, the trainers, their sensibility and relationship with the children and youth were identified (Kunz, 2009).

A project in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) for reintegration of street children used strategies based on the *KRAFT* model that distinguishes five aspects: body (*Körper*), rules (*Regeln*), respect and acceptance (*Akzeptanz*), fair play (*Fairness*) and team-work (*Team*). An evaluation completed after the pilot phase found that 16 out of 19 children showed improvements on indicators related to socialisation (Born, 2005).

Recently, the concept of *resilience* has gained more importance in trauma related studies and intervention (Henley, Schweizer, de Gara, & Vetter, 2007; Grassrootsoccer, 2007). Evaluating a psychosocial programme in 18 recreation centres of *Terre des hommes – Lousanne* (Tdh) in Sri-Lanka after the tsunami, the *Impact of Event Scale Revised* (IES), the *Strength & Difficulties Questionnaire* (SDQ) and the *Resiliency Scale* (RS) were used in two testing phases, obtaining data from 242 children who had participated in both phases. Apart from describing the risk and protective factors of the children and youth at the recreation centres, significant improvements of some factors were found between August 2005 and August 2006. In this regard, the recreational and sport activities were positively evaluated as part of a wider psychosocial and interdisciplinary approach (Colliard & Baggio, 2007).

Also Ley (2009), in his doctoral thesis, approached a wider understanding of movement, games and sports, including methods and techniques of movement and sport therapy, local movements, dances, materials and games, improvisation, dramatisation, relaxation exercises, and creative and participatory techniques. In the post conflict context of Guatemala, these activities were used in the psychosocial programme APM with two groups of indigenous women (in total 56 participants), who suffer, or suffered, violence. The resource orientated *Salutogenesis model* of Antonovsky (Antonovsky, 1987) and other logical models were used for intervention and research. Both, qualitative (participatory observation, diaries, interviews and participatory group techniques) and quantitative (questionnaire) methods found their strengths and limitations in this study, so that the author recommended an integral research design for such a context. The qualitative results confirmed (changes through

the programme), supplemented (with the information about inputs and processes) and deepened (in the context) the quantitative results.

The *outcome* evaluation of the APM programme showed improvements of cognitive (knowledge and strategies to handle stress situations), and psychological resources (self esteem and emotional relaxation). The self esteem and the Sense of Coherence (SOC) increased significantly in the research group of 33 women who participated in both the initial and final evaluation.

Analysing the *inputs* and *processes* of intervention, the active, dynamic and participative character of the programme was highlighted as a main factor for these changes and as well as the difference from other programmes in the area. Other decisive aspects were: the learning process through games and reflections, the confidential atmosphere, the role of the monitors, the active involvement of the participants, the relaxation exercises, and the participatory group techniques. The high motivation and (mostly) regular participation from the first involvement, despite the daily difficulties and limited opportunities for women, and the high level of importance they assigned to the programme, speaks to a high degree of pertinence and social-cultural appropriateness of the APM programme (Ley, 2009).

Dance and movement therapy programmes with Sudanese refugees in United States of America and with ex-soldiers in Sierra Leone appeared to be effective in reducing the deep ruptures caused by trauma and to have achieved a very pertinent adaptation to the social-cultural background (Harris, 2007). The programme with refugees, in which traditional movements and dances were combined with rituals and coping mechanisms of the South Sudanese Dinka culture, achieved an improvement

in solidarity, group cohesion and preventive and repairing factors. In particular, in reference to their refugee situation; being away from their home country and beyond the armed conflict atmosphere they suffered. In the case of the ex-soldiers in Sierra Leone:

'Program evaluation revealed a drop in average symptom expression among a group comprised of former boy combatants who reported continual reduction in symptoms of anxiety, depression, intrusive recollection, elevated arousal, and aggression' (Harris, 2007).

The boys participated actively in dance improvisations and other creative exercises. Afterwards, they decided to present their war experiences through role-playing to the public. In this way, they improved their (re-) integration into the community. There is an increasing interest in movement and body centred methods and techniques in other disciplines, for example, in the integrative trauma therapy, recognising the potential of non-verbal activities.

'A holistic view on the human organism and the interconnections between body, psyche and soul justify, within the integral approaches of trauma related work, the use of a diversity of methods and techniques from the area of body-psychotherapy, body and movement centred work, Gestalt-therapy, creative therapy, the work with inner/internal images, as well as psychodrama' (Joachim, 2006).

In all these diverse methods, the work in the *'here and now'* and the reciprocal relationship between psychological and corporal aspects achieve importance.

Also in centres for refugees, several practices show favourable combinations of non-verbal and verbal expression and corresponding

techniques (Callaghan, 1993; Endel, 1996; Gray, 2001; Karcher, 2000; Koch, & Weidinger, 2009; Koop, 2000; Schaeffer, 2004). Only an interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach in trauma therapy can respond adequately to the situation of the traumatised people, including psychosocial or psychotherapeutic techniques, and body and movement centred methods. However, a corresponding integral research design and evaluation are lacking.

In total, there exist several experiences, using a rich spectrum of psychomotor methods and movement therapies, like *sport therapy*, *integrative movement therapy*, *cognitive movement therapy*, *dance movement therapy*, *psychodrama* and *sociodrama* to (re-)establish the integrity of the traumatised person and to promote coping resources, among other goals (Akhundov, 1999; Harris, 2007; Joachim, 2006; Karcher, 2000; Koop, 2000; Ley, 2009; Petzold, 1999). Most of these approaches are based on similar principles, for example, the work in the *'here and now'*, the use of a holistic perspective, the interrelation of body, mind and soul, etc. They largely adapt to the social-cultural context of the participants, and to the progressive phases of trauma therapy: stabilising, confrontation and (re-)integration. In the framework of an integrative trauma therapy the following methods and techniques centred on body and movement are used:

- Relaxation, respiration and body awareness exercises.
 - Physiotherapeutic techniques (especially when there are physical impacts/wounds from direct violence, torture, or other kinds of injuries).
 - Psychomotor techniques and games.
 - Techniques of movement, dance and sport therapy.
- Creative and participative techniques, games, theatre, role playing, dramatizations, etc.

Furthermore;

'For the practical psychosocial and psychotherapeutic work we must develop a diagnostic approach that accords with the general principles of working with survivors of sexual violence of war' (Joachim, 2006).

Creative and participative techniques centred on body and movement can also be an alternative, or complement, to a verbal diagnostic.

'In this sense, diagnostics can be an important part of the therapeutic process, if not only information is asked, but also the possibility given, that the clients can express their experiences and sentiments in their own manner' (Joachim, 2006).

Observed during creative and sport activities in psychosocial interventions of War Child Holland in Kosovo, the war affected and displaced children *'tend to communicate and express themselves by playing, rather than talking'* (Wertheim-Cahen, Euwema & Nabarro, 2005). Creative, active and participatory techniques, games and sport offer an outstanding opportunity for observation and experience based and experience *'moved'* therapeutic processes; therefore they are excellent diagnostic means (Kalksma-Van Lith, 2007; Ley, 2009).

Conclusion

Recognising the ambivalent nature of sport, and that movement, games and sport do not always nor automatically have a positive impact, we need to use them intentionally and professionally as tools of psychosocial

intervention. From the above review, the authors conclude the following:

- Games and sport are popular all over the world, but care must be taken that they are not exclusively for only a certain population, and that the most affected of the target group are included. Therefore, it is important to know how to adapt and modify each of the games and sports, so that they match with the capacities, interests and needs of the participants. A wide range of different activities, especially inclusive games and sports, should be offered.
- It is important that the projects are based on local circumstances, culture and thinking, lead by the needs, interests and goals of the local population and enriched by mutual learning and respectful interaction of all stakeholders and participants. A social-cultural understanding of movement, games and sport in the local context is needed before planning interventions. The influences of modern sports, as well as the setting of the promotion of cultural games and sports (for example, their promotion outside of their traditional setting) should be critically reflected in each context.
- Consequently, concrete strategies should always be used regarding each specific context and goal. There is no universal strategy that can be applied to every project. Also, the sustainability of our actions should always be included; not wasting money, time and effort in *'political promotion'* projects. The context of violence and conflict might endanger sustainability. Nevertheless, resource orientated projects might hopefully contribute to long term coping with the situation. Therefore, specific strategies, local leadership, formation, permanent evaluation and income generating activities are greatly needed.
- Specific strategies could include, for example: mixed teams, modifying rules, self-refereed matches that assigns responsibility to the participants, or using referees as mediators in *'small conflicts'*, use of experience based and educational games, creating (informal) opportunities for (voluntary) expression through body and movement, verbal reflections on feelings and experiences occurring during the games, informal counselling, participatory techniques that allow participants to analyse specific aspects and to test possible solutions in a safe and secure environment, group processes that promote interaction, and mutual support among the participants, etc.
- In movement, games and sport programmes, participants are active. They are not *'only'* listening or talking about an aspect, but also experiencing and expressing it with their own body. They are in *'movement'*: socially, emotionally and physically. The programme can be very participatory and creative where the participants can search for their own solutions, alternatives and changes. Therefore, trainers and monitors should be well trained in observing the body in movement and interaction, adapting activities and facilitating participatory group processes.
- In some cases, sport on its own can be limited in viability and outcome, and participants would not benefit from all of its potential. Sport should be combined with other activities. On the one side, a wider understanding of sport is appropriate, including activities like movement and body centred activities, relaxation exercises, dance, small games, popular games, psychomotor games,

dramatisation, theatre, etc. On the other side, to benefit from the potential of movement, games and sport, it is favourable to combine them with other interventions and stakeholders, like: schools, hospitals, youth centres, etc., to work on a more interdisciplinary approach. Games and sport can sometimes reach where speaking cannot, for example, due to language barriers or relationship difficulties. Games and sport can engage those who do not assist in school, do not go to doctors or do not participate in psychotherapy programmes due to motivational or social-cultural barriers. They can be good mediators and a catalyst for other interventions. At the same time, the combination of movement, games and sport with verbal reflection and other psychosocial techniques is very powerful, and helps to increase impact and transfer of acquired knowledge to other life situations. A sport programme should not be considered exclusive or separate, but be recognised and integrated into part of a holistic intervention.

It seems difficult to isolate the impact of movement, games and sports, as various factors influence it. Sometimes it is not the activity itself that provokes a change, but for example, the mere offer of any activity that may provoke the same effect. Identifying the responsible factors is important to understand change. It is important to look at who is (not) participating, and why. Further evaluation and research is needed. The work with the most affected and disadvantaged populations, and the context of violence, disaster or conflict might inhibit the process of evaluation and research. However, shown in this article, through examples, evaluation is possible and very much needed. Care must be taken that

evaluation and research are also appropriately adapted and sensitive to the local context and situation. In conclusion, the use of movement, games and sport can be powerful and meaningful in psychosocial interventions when it is used in an appropriate way.

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