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Introduction

Football has gained recognition (with varying degrees of justification) as a simple, low-cost and apparently effective means of pursuing development goals across a number of contexts and localities. In seeking to address the perceived needs of developing communities, football has been used to promote social development in numerous politically and socially tense environments (Riak, 2000). Programmes of this nature are increasingly being employed to build bridges between communities, to foster peace and to promote educational, health and social development (Rookwood, 2009). Typically, development initiatives often led by agencies from the ‘Global North’, have been implemented in the ‘Global South’. These include football federations and clubs, as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and educational institutions. The expansion of programming and related critical analysis has given rise to the collective term ‘sport-for-development’, although the dominant applied focus on football, and the remit of this book, suggests that ‘football-for-development’ is more applicable here. Its perceived simplicity, adaptability and global appeal and exposure have arguably positioned football as the most exploited sporting tool for development purposes. This chapter draws on the growing literature base, exploring the design, implementation, analysis and impact of such projects, and the role of the agencies responsible for their delivery.

The development of football and football for development

Football, NGOs, social development and agents of change

The 2010–14 research agenda of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development is based on the premise that social development does not simply include improvements in material well-being but also progress in relation to equity, social cohesion and democratic participation. It is important to address social development theory here, which positions motives, mechanisms and conditions as drivers of social change. NGOs that engage in football-for-development work typically adopt various motivations, including moral obligations, religious conviction, altruism and personal development. A range of mechanisms are employed, depending on the context in question, ranging from short, singular ventures to various forms of
sustainable, long-term social development. The conditions underpinning work of this nature tend to be a response to a perceived need.

NGOs typically respond to those who have been victimised by particular circumstances, especially those who have been exposed to experiences including poverty, famine, disease, disaster, conflict, persecution or terrorism. In an examination of the relative severity of such problems facing contemporary societies, Barash states: ‘There is reason to believe that our most pressing problem is not hunger, disease, poverty, social inequality, overpopulation, or environmental degradation, but rather violence that human beings commit and threaten to commit against others’ (2000: 3). Some NGOs have used football in response to such challenges.

With an estimated 40,000 established NGOs worldwide, it is difficult to frame their responses to societal need, or present a useful typology (Rookwood, 2011). However, in his influential study Korten (1990) suggests that these organisations typically focus on one or more of the following areas: humanitarian relief and welfare, including water, food, shelter and health promotion, which is urgently required and aimed directly at beneficiaries; small-scale, self-reliant local development, where the aim is to maximise the capacity of local communities to meet their needs; and sustainable systems development, where the focus is typically to advance changes in policies and institutions at local, national and international levels. Given their extensive range of engagements, definitions of what actually constitutes an NGO can vary, however it can be characterised as:

An independent organization that is neither run by government nor driven by the profit motive like private sector businesses. Yet there are some NGOs that receive high levels of government funding and possess some of the characteristics of bureaucracies, while others can resemble highly professionalized private organizations with strongly corporate identities.

(Lewis and Kanji, 2009: 3)

These agencies now feature in mainstream language and consciousness. In 2004 NGOs were thought to be responsible for approximately US$23bn in aid money, equating to around one-third of total overseas development aid (Riddell, 2007: 53) – figures which have increased significantly in the last decade.

There is normally an acceptance among NGOs that ‘humanitarian’ needs should not incur ‘developmental’ responses, particularly when considering Korten’s framework. Only certain needs and conditions therefore require or might benefit from sporting engagement. In developmental contexts, therefore, the pertinent question facing NGOs here is – under what conditions can football serve as a vehicle for social development? Given Barash’s (2000) argument about society’s most pressing concerns and the prevalence of violence, football might not always appear an obvious mechanism with which to respond. Furthermore, the relevance of football in the context of health promotion, education or peace building might appear limited. However, when viewed as a means by which messages might be communicated, relationships improved or processes initiated, the relevance of football can be heightened. Various NGOs have sought to utilise football in developmental contexts of what is popularly called the Global South. It is unknown how widely (and in many cases how successfully) the sport is implemented in this respect, because the literature base is yet to produce a reliable collective assessment. This reflects the range of localities and organisations concerned, as well as the lack of collaboration and analysis of and between projects and agencies (which complicates assessments of impact). However, it would be useful to highlight a couple of projects which illustrate some of the approaches adopted and the sociopolitical contexts in which they are based.
NGO football-for-development and social change programmes

In Liberia for example, the STAR football project was established following the official cessation of a double civil war. The first conflict broke out in 1989 and the second culminated in 2004, and one-quarter of a million Liberians died with a further one million displaced during these conflicts. The wars were prolonged by the supply of arms from foreign nations and the coercion of youths into combat, primarily through abduction (Rookwood, 2011). Post-war Liberia saw severe competition for the limited resources available and disunity between various factions, and many community members feared young people, who were considered a threat to peace. Reconciliation required developing social bonds to reduce tensions between child ex-combatants and other community members (Omeje, 2009). The STAR project was inspired by this objective. The project was run by the British, Canadian and Liberian offices of Samaritan’s Purse, a Christian NGO famed for the Shoebox campaign that has seen over 100 million boxes given to disadvantaged children in more than 130 countries since 1990.

The STAR project ran for two years from 2006, and was underpinned by a Christian ethos. It is one of a number of distinct short-term collaborate football ventures run by Samaritan’s Purse UK between 1998 and 2008, most of which have not been subject to academic analysis. As a symbol, ‘Star’ signifies Liberia’s declaration of independence from the American Colonization Society (Armstrong, 2002), and as a label ‘STAR’ is an acronym for the value-driven coaching philosophy, focusing on self-discipline, truthfulness, appreciation and respect. Football was employed as a conflict, non-codified and competitive activity during the various stages of the initiative, which involved a mix of non-child soldiers and former youth combatants. For instance, coaches simulated conflict situations within sessions to teach participants about ‘positive’ means of resolution in a controlled environment. Liberian volunteers were trained during the project by British coaches as part of a football education programme, with each local coach given responsibility for a team that competed in subsequently established leagues, which were managed by local partners (Rookwood, 2011). Little is known about the long-term impact of such ventures.

Providing a useful frame of reference, the ‘Open Fun Football Schools’ is a more established and widespread example. The initiative is run by Cross Cultures, a non-profit project organisation, the operational base of which is in Denmark. The organisers describe the project as ‘humanitarian’ (Rookwood and Palmer, 2011: 187), which may infer some confusion given the definitional position adopted in this chapter, yet this may simply demonstrate semantic differences in the use of terminology across borders. The programme aims to facilitate inter-ethnic integration and social cohesion in splintered communities. A condition of participation in this scheme often involves a ‘twin-city’ strategy, whereby groups join up with another from a different ethnic background to promote peace, reconciliation and democracy in a bid to help stabilise post-conflict communities. The project also aims to contribute towards cross-sector crime prevention, serving as a platform for collaboration between schools, football organisations and law enforcement agencies. Another objective concerns the promotion of active citizenship, based on the principles of equality, inclusion, volunteerism and parental involvement. Having been initiated in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1998, the project has thus far been implemented in 21 countries (17 of which are currently ongoing) across Balkan, Trans-Caucasus, Central and Eastern European, Gulf, Central Asian and MENA regions. Given the variety of locations, the project is one of a very limited number of global initiatives using a specific model across countries, responding and adapting to a range of sociopolitical challenges.

In Britain, a small number of academic institutions have illustrated an international commitment to support young people living in developing, fractious and disadvantaged
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communities. Some universities have included football-based opportunities as part of their curricula, but a more common practice involves students volunteering on global projects. Volunteering – offering one’s services without monetary gain, is becoming increasingly popular among British students (Sugden, 2007). The University of Brighton for example, deliver the Football for Peace (F4P) programme, a project that has been staged annually in Israel since 2001. F4P is in part a response to the Israel–Palestine conflict, a fractious relationship deeply rooted in history, with complex and widespread contemporary manifestations. Conflicting territorial claims (often in Palestine) based on religious and political perspectives dominate the sociopolitical dialogue and media representation, and the status of Jewish–Arab relations who live side by side in Israel is often overlooked as a consequence (Rookwood and Wassong, 2010). This is particularly the case for young people, who are often marginalised from social development and peace building activities. The F4P model employs a collaboratively designed value-based football coaching programme to facilitate peaceful integration among children who cohabit Jewish and Arab communities (Nujidat, 2007).

According to the founder F4P is a ‘secular organisation that is underpinned by a principle of neutrality and is not affiliated with any religious or political groups’ (Whitfield, 2006: ix). Each year undergraduate students engage in a comprehensive training programme before travelling to various locations in Israel to lead the youth football project. The coaches are supported by respected local personnel, who provide practical and linguistic support. The students follow guidelines provided in a specifically produced manual, which emphasises value-based instruction through football coaching. The underlying principles are implemented through ‘teachable moments’ (Lambert, 2007: 20). Values are imbedded in the coaching programme, which is considered to promote cooperation and mutual understanding and aid coexistence and conflict prevention, including trust, respect, neutrality, responsibility and inclusion (Rookwood, 2008). Projects culminate in ‘festival days’, where teams of mixed identities compete in a tournament, thus preventing a triumph representing a victory over ‘the other’. Instead, teams of mixed identities must cooperate in order to achieve common objectives on the field; lessons which it is hoped might be taken on in life. Sociological and pedagogical research has been conducted on the F4P initiative, which is published for ‘those wanting to run such a project in other political climes’ (Whitfield, 2006: 174), providing a ‘valuable resource for those concerned with similar projects and initiatives taking place in different parts of the world’ (Sugden, 2007: 181). The F4P model has also since been developed on smaller scales in Northern Ireland and Jordan.

More recently the University of Central Lancashire established a collaborative project in Southern Africa. Undergraduate sport students volunteer on a Right to Play (RtP) football development project in Zambia as part of their academic studies in sport and international ‘aid’. RtP is an athlete-driven international ‘humanitarian’ organisation that uses sport and play as mechanisms for youth development in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world. Their programmes aim to improve the lives of children affected by poverty, war and disease (Kenyon and Rookwood, 2009). The projects are designed to teach key skills including teamwork, leadership, conflict resolution, communication, self-esteem, commitment, respect and fair play. This collaborative programme commenced in 2008 and its value and impact are yet to be evaluated. However, it may be considered representative of the forms of engagement British universities have explored over the last decade.

**Promoting social development: football clubs and federations**

Much football-for-development work is undertaken by organisations and individuals within, and representing, professional football. For example, high-profile players, often those that have
migrated to ply their trade for clubs in more prosperous footballing nations have funded or been associated with programmes in their name. Since 2007, Didier Drogba has invested personal funds in his self-titled foundation (for which he also acts as president) – the Didier Drogba Foundation – that provides financial and material support aimed at improving health and education opportunities for children across the African continent. Others have explored the trend for leading football clubs to establish academies and development centres in developing nations (Darby and Solberg, 2010). In addition, the positive labelling of development activity through football is attractive to commercial companies. Businesses aligning their corporate social responsibility (CSR) with development activities can advance their own products and position in emerging and developing global markets by sponsoring development programmes. For example, Adidas sponsor Coaching for Hope and Right to Play (mentioned earlier), while BP sponsors the Football for Peace programme (Levermore, 2009). Each of these activities represents some form of ‘development’ activity in their own right. However, our attention now turns to social development work undertaken by football organisations within professional football.

Federations such as FIFA, and each of its member associations, are in some way attached to organisations and campaigns or projects listed collectively under ‘development’ activity. In addition, many football clubs ranging from those with local reputation and scope (Walters and Chadwick, 2009), to internationally renowned club brands (Hamil et al., 2010), appear to be becoming actively engaged in social development work. Indeed, some football clubs have established foundations or charitable arms to deliver initiatives. While the growth of this activity on domestic and international scales is difficult to accurately determine, the involvement in social development activities by football organisations appears to be escalating. Football-for-development activities are not undertaken in a sociopolitical vacuum, are bound up in neoliberal and postcolonial models of development, and underpinned by increasingly interdependent social development organisations and the complex divisions of labour therein. Therefore, how are the development activities of football federations and clubs shaped, and how do they contribute to social development?

Publicly available information on the websites of football organisations suggest that a significant proportion of social development work is located in, or aligned with, football organisation’s social strand of CSR. For example, FIFA’s Football for Hope programme is located in the social responsibility section of its web page. Some top-level European football clubs include social development activity within their CSR, or devote web pages to charities or foundations in the clubs’ name that undertake social development work. Other than basic reporting of CSR activities (Walters and Tacon, 2013), for the most part development activities undertaken by football clubs and federations receive less publicity and attention than other footballing matters. For example, performances on the pitch or the bidding and hosting arrangements for major international tournaments. However, in the light of the increasing globalisation and corporatisation of elite-level football, the involvement in CSR activities by federations and internationally reputable elite clubs has become increasingly prominent (Levermore, 2010).

As an endeavour and academic discipline, CSR has generally emerged as part of the practice of business organisations that increasingly seek to demonstrate a commitment to activities not required by law that contribute to social development beyond the financial interests of the organisation (Carroll and Shabana, 2010). The precise motives of sports organisations to involve themselves in social development activities are difficult to identify, but are broadly accepted as being altruistic, strategic, or both (Babiak and Wolfe, 2009; Sheth and Babiak, 2010). Some suggest that CSR is a normative and instrumental tool which aligns ethical behaviour with profitability and as a function for business-related objectives (Sheth and Babiak, 2010).
The formalisation and long-term development of CSR activities into the business functions of federations and clubs, have partly been associated with a response to high-profile disreputable behaviour, and a possible tactic in dissuading regulatory bodies from imposing legislation on clubs and federations to contribute to social development (Waddington et al., 2013). A strategic orientation of development work under the label CSR can be perceived as a way for an organisation to simultaneously enhance the reputation of federations during times of crisis and bad publicity (especially following revelations of an unethical nature), as well as seeking to advance the position and commercial interests of brands (both clubs and corporate partners) within an increasingly global and competitive football market. On this view, CSR activity represents an apology for, and a deflection from, social harms inflicted by such organisations on society in the pursuit of self-interest (Waddington et al., 2013). Indeed, Levermore (2010) in discussing Sport for Development (SfD) more generally, identifies three specific concerns with CSR schemes utilised for SfD which football clubs and federations may contribute to: the intensification of unequal North–South relations (for example, football clubs setting up development projects and centres in Africa and more recently Asia which extracts albeit relatively few young indigenous talent); that such initiatives are deficient in substance and can be used in a disingenuous manner to distract from corporate irresponsibility; and the lack of accountability and measurement of CSR for development through sport schemes. The relationship between CSR initiatives and social development outcomes can be largely uncritically accepted as superficially beneficial, which often neglects limitations (Levermore, 2010) and often promoted as a ‘win–win’ situation for both football organisations and the wider social groups whom they are deemed to serve (Newell and Frynas, 2007).

Football federations and social development programmes

Football federations have long been involved in activities attaching football with ‘development’ in its broadest sense. Not surprisingly, it is the work of FIFA that has acquired more academic and popular attention than any other football federation. FIFA has emphasised football as a development vehicle in different ways, shaped by and large by the socio-economic, cultural and political conditions from different epochs. The modern game of football was bound up in the neo-colonial and Eurocentric era of Rous (1961–74), which viewed football as a diffusing vehicle to espouse a paternalistic, modern set of values to a pre-modern ‘Third-World periphery’. In the context of decolonisation whereby new and developing nations emerged out of former empires, Havelange followed, with a change in approach by establishing partnerships with large corporations to advance his notion of ‘football development aid’ with a focus on enhancing coaching, playing standards, development of facilities and providing equipment with a focus on youth development. Blatter’s leadership witnessed a continuation of both corporate partnership and a focus on youth, which upon his presidential victory in 1998, he aligned with the UN to promote ‘common’ and ‘shared’ values to promote children’s rights, health and physical exercise and vaccination campaigns (FIFA, 1999, cited in Manzo, 2012).

Relatively recently, FIFA appears to have presided over two notable shifts in orientation towards development and football. First, there has been a relatively clear split between football development and development through football activities (Manzo, 2012). Following the Monterrey agreement by developed nations in 2002 in which developed nations committed 0.7 per cent of national GDP to international aid, football federations such as FIFA and UEFA pledged the same proportion of their total revenue from football activities to social development. In order to manage distinct ‘development through football’ activities, in 2005 FIFA established and housed such activity within a discrete CSR department. And, second, such activity has
been characterised by an ‘Afro-friendly’ orientation of FIFA’s policies and programmes under the leadership of Sepp Blatter (Manzo, 2012). FIFA’s Football for Hope programme, arguably the most prominent and well-known social development programme delivered in association with football federations, and located in FIFA’s social responsibility area of work, indeed focuses the majority of its work in the continent of Africa (Streetworldfootball, 2013).

Established as a partnership with Streetworldfootball in 2005 to coordinate different organisations and programmes with social development goals, the programme is described as ‘harnessing the power of football to drive social change’ (FIFA, 2008), and ‘football’s commitment to social development’ (FIFA, 2011). FIFA is not involved in the direct delivery of social development activities. Legally registered organisations with non-governmental, religiously independent and not-for-profit status are supported to implement their social development programmes. Adopting a neo-liberal approach to social development (Manzo, 2012), FIFA claims to act as a facilitator providing an ‘attractive platform for public and private sectors, civil society and multi-lateral development institutions to invest in a sustainable way and develop innovative partnerships for social development’ (FIFA, 2011). In excess of 200 programmes in over 60 countries are claimed to be supported serving ‘hundreds of thousands of young people’ and children (FIFA, 2011) globally, by providing them with ‘tools’ that make a ‘difference to their lives’, that specifically address social challenges in their local communities.

Many programmes supported by Football for Hope are introduced to coincide with, and are attached to, the FIFA World Cup. As part of the legacy for the FIFA 2010 World Cup in South Africa, FIFA aimed to create 20 Football for Hope Centres to ‘promote public health, education and football in disadvantaged communities across Africa, leaving a tangible social legacy for the continent’ (FIFA, 2011). In line with the ethos for Football for Hope, local organisations considered successful in delivering social development through football were to be based at a newly built facility with the aim of becoming a self-supporting hub and model for social development. The facilities were to be designed in collaboration with the community to ensure the infrastructure was consistent with local needs. Although neo-liberal values such as entrepreneurialism, individual responsibility and individualism (Manzo, 2012) are apparent in FIFA’s approach to Football for Hope, it appears that key implementing NGO partners such as MYSA and Diambars are the immediate beneficiaries, rather than the social development of recipients (FIFA, 2011).

While FIFA’s commitment to utilising football as a force for sustainable social development may be considered by many as commendable and philanthropic, grand claims made by FIFA in relation to both its involvement and the impact of that involvement are open to critique. Not least because FIFA funds only 10 per cent of the total estimated cost of the Football for Hope Programme (Manzo, 2012), the rest of which is met by an increasing range of often corporate partners. In addition, a 40 × 20m football pitch was to be complemented by facilities dedicated to education and public health in each centre. Yet, that Yingli Solar – a corporate sponsor and partner of FIFA which has had its logo emblazoned across billboards at the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil was contracted to build parts of the facilities may point towards the business priorities of FIFA’s CSR strategy and its corporate partners’ interests. The leveraging of social programmes such as the football hubs was reported to have presented FIFA as a socially responsible organisation among tourists attending the 2010 World Cup (Walker et al., 2013). Resonating with Levermore’s (2010) second concern with development activity under the CSR banner, that only eight out of the 20 centres materialised (Waddington et al., 2013) does open FIFA up to the criticism that their claims are deficient in substance, possibly disingenuous, and a possible attempt to distract from corporate irresponsibility, or even worse, corruption. Moreover, the Football for Hope programme has been utilised as an attempt by FIFA to placate
public anxiety in relation to the economic and social cost of hosting the FIFA 2014 World Cup in Brazil which manifested itself in the form of protests and demonstrations. The Football for Hope forum held in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in 2013 sought to engage with the underlying social issues that FIFA was paradoxically contributing to, by showcasing how football could purportedly create positive social change in local, regional and national communities. That this has been suggested as an ongoing ‘strategic’ CSR piece of consultancy work for FIFA Streetworldfootball (2013) is revealing.

**Football clubs’ social development programmes**

The majority of football-for-development work appears to be undertaken in association with professional football clubs. The English Premier League (EPL), too, has a department dedicated to CSR activities – known as Creating Chances – under which social development programmes occur. The EPL redistributes 15 per cent of Premier League revenue to external organisations, of which 4 per cent is invested into CSR community programmes (Morgan, 2013) and covering programmes such as Kickz and Premier League 4 Sport.

A UEFA-funded survey of social development activity under the banner of CSR (generating a response rate of 17.25 per cent from all top division clubs across 44 countries under UEFA’s jurisdiction) indicated that ‘large clubs’ were more likely to have a formal CSR strategy involving the use of football to address social development. They were also more likely to receive funding from governmental and other sources in addition to a dedicated CSR budget; and be associated with a charitable organisation or foundation delivering such activities on behalf of the club (Walters and Tacon, 2013). These activities broadly related to the importance of supporting youth programmes (81.2 per cent) and various forms of community engagement projects (72.7 per cent). Significantly, 37.8 per cent of clubs reported operating or supporting community programmes in developing countries. Meeting a social need was identified as the most important aspect of CSR work, while profitability of CSR ventures was indicated as the least important. Interestingly, the public relations value of a particular social action was noted as especially appealing to football clubs.

One large, internationally renowned football club that encapsulates the full range and scope of activities noted above is FC Barcelona. Indeed, Hamil et al. (2010) contend that FC Barcelona’s CSR programme is among the most extensive of any sporting organisation. The club’s foundation was inaugurated in 1994 partly as a strategic response to concerns that FC Barcelona was becoming too commercialised and losing its traditional values associated with community and solidarity. The foundation was strategically implemented to develop the club’s corporate social responsibilities and houses all social development activity in the club’s name under the slogan ‘Football is not Everything’. The club was also the first sports organisation to reach agreement with UNESCO to jointly promote education, social inclusion, literacy and citizenship through social development programmes (Hamil et al., 2010). FC Barcelona have also entered into a number of alliances with other high-profile foundations undertaking development work such as: the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Leo Messi Foundation and the Inter-American Development Bank, in addition to a non-profit sponsorship deal with UNICEF. In retaining social development locally, all projects of the FC Barcelona Foundation are based on the promotion of education and the positive values of sport for young people with a primary focus in the region of Catalonia.

As have football federations, from 2006 the club has adhered to the United Nations ‘Millennium Development Goals’ and yields 0.7 per cent of ordinary income from FC Barcelona to the foundation for its projects. Since 2010, the players and coaching staff from the professional sections
of the club have also donated 0.5 per cent of their wages to the foundation. The FC Barcelona Foundation also operated a programme called ‘Futbolnet’, aimed at transmitting values to children and adolescents, which involves sporting activities as a means to promoting healthy and harmonious growth (FC Barcelona, 2013). Variations of football activity are designed to promote the values of commitment, respect, tolerance, teamwork, responsibility and strength among young people with socio-educational problems such as learning difficulties, and those exposed to vulnerable family circumstance, particularly those with financial issues (FC Barcelona, 2013). In line with the global brand and increasing globalisation of FC Barcelona, the scope of ‘Futbolnet’ has recently been expanded from Catalonia to the Middle East, supported by sponsorship from Shell, and to Africa in a partnership with the IOC (FC Barcelona, 2013). It is claimed that there were 81,000 beneficiaries across 28 countries, 23 of which are in Africa, in 5,280 minutes of football. An evaluation of participants’ behaviour is undertaken, which claims to measure success on the basis that an 88 per cent average attendance as an indication of impact on the motivation of recipients, and that on a qualitative level, the development and attitude of the beneficiaries has been positive. Evidence of which is the apparent ability of recipients to operationalise values of the programme; for example, children being able to positively resolve conflicts that have arisen within football activities on the programmes without the intervention of an adult or nominated referee (FC Barcelona, 2013). The methods of monitoring and evaluation do not extend beyond this reporting on the Barcelona website, and as with many other football clubs and organisations, the reader is asked to uncritically accept the clubs own claims as to impact of the programme. The lack of transparency here again reflects Levermore’s (2010) concerns regarding a lack of substance and robust evaluation methods. This is not to say this programme and others are not having a positive and intended impact on those recipients involved. But the evidence base upon which grand claims are made appears to be weak.

At a more local level, one of the most prominent institutionalised (Anagnostopoulos, 2013) and purportedly successful (Parnell et al., 2013) forms of CSR integrating social development work is the Football in the Community (FiTC) scheme in England. There appears to be an increasing variety of schemes under the banner of FiTC, which vary depending on how FiTC is attached to the broader structure of individual clubs; whether FiTC arms have charitable status or operate through foundations linked to clubs. Generally, however, FiTC schemes were instigated on the back of relatively high-profile crises involving hooliganism and poor player behaviour in 1980s England (Morgan, 2013). FiTC schemes have evolved to be integral components of some, largely high profile, club’s CSR strategies (Parnell et al., 2013). The longevity of these schemes are explained in part, by the perception of successive governments and wider societal actors that football clubs have capacity and ability to deliver on broader social policy objectives, and are a hook for community engagement (Hindley and Williamson, 2013). As the role and function of FiTC schemes evolved from a remedial function to social development priorities, FiTC schemes have become enmeshed in increasingly interdependent relationships with a variety of societal, governmental actors and organisations, and public and private funding bodies to fund an increasing variety and range of programmes. Once embedded within the organisational and operational structure of the football club, it is becoming increasingly common for FiTC departments or schemes to have financial, structural and strategic independence, but to maintain association through branding, naming and exposure.

One particularly useful example is Everton in the Community (EiTC), which is one of the most high-profile community-based organisations in England and beyond. Having originally focused on professional player appearances to promote local causes in deprived and marginalised communities in Liverpool, the organisation gained charitable status in 2004. The charity has won numerous awards for its social development and community work, most notably ‘Best
Community Scheme in Europe’ at the Stadium Business Awards in 2011, Barcelona. EitC engages over 13,000 people annually across programmes relating to health (mental and physical), social inclusion, education and community development. These are supported by 65 full-time staff, 70 part-time staff and over 130 volunteers. As a charity, EitC operates independently from (but with the support of) Everton Football Club which enabled it to expand its remit to include more tangible involvement in outreach and social development work. This independence allows EitC to develop bespoke schemes relevant to the locality of the organisation, while securing funding from a range of public sources to pursue programmes with a variety of social development goals. Imagine Your Goals is one such programme. Originally local in scope, the programme seeks to engage men with mental illness (e.g. depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder) living in local communities to attend coaching workshops and related welfare services to share problems and seek support in a familiar environment. In 2008 local partner Mersey Care NHS Trust jointly funded the programme with the Premier League Community Fund, enabling Everton to become the first Premier League club in the country to appoint a full-time mental health football coordinator. The programme is now accessed by around 150 players each week, and has expanded to be delivered by all Premier League clubs. EitC (2012) reports that there have been many successes from the programme, including players who have improved fitness, have better mental well-being, with some having gone on to undertake coaching qualifications, volunteering and employment. To develop more robust and independent monitoring and evaluation of their programmes, EitC has developed relationships with higher education institutions, including Edge Hill University in Lancashire, UK. However, as with the example of FC Barcelona and the activities of FIFA, there presently appears to be little or no recourse to monitoring or evaluation of FiTC programmes more generally (Hindley and Williamson, 2013). A cursory trawl through the websites of such organisations with global reputations and reach, reveal grandiose and vague claims other than case study material and headline figures regarding the impact of such programmes on social development, and a lack of publicly available evidence to support them. While these programmes and activities undoubtedly attract numerous participants due in large part to the power of the ‘badge’ of the club and its reputation in the local communities in which such work exists, with some small exceptions, there is little to no evidence of externally funded, rigorous independent research or evaluation as to the effects of such programmes.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have highlighted some examples of football-for-development work, and the challenges faced by NGOs and professional football organisations in the field. Given the increasing interdependence between organisations, funding bodies and the perceived wide ranging social development outcomes their programmes can bring, it is likely that football-for-development activities will be sustained and further evolve in the future. Our discussion, however, does highlight some caveats in relation to the future success of football-for-development activity.

First, we have noted that football as a tool for different forms of development is expanding and evolving. In the context of globalisation, for example, many contemporary initiatives discussed in the chapter resonate with notions of western values from muscular Christianity to neo-liberal models of development (Manzo, 2012) being imparted to recipients in activities related to football. Neo-liberal demands have emphasised more strategic designs and implementation of such programmes to be supported by evidence and a growth in evaluation studies. As indicated from our examples, paradoxically, the evidence base is weak and appears to
privilege positivist forms of knowledge at the expense of understanding the views and perceptions of recipients (Kay, 2009) in relation to their ‘development’. In addition, the legitimacy of claims related to social development impact and outcomes in the SfD field more broadly have been questioned (Coalter, 2013). Federations and clubs are not required to assess the social impact of their programmes in any detail, or with any degree of formality (Breitbarth et al., 2011; James and Miettinen, 2010), despite schemes such as FiTC drawing public money or charitable funding from government and other agencies in order to undertake such development work. NGOs also are responsible only to their funding bodies and sponsors, often corporate entities that have a vested interest in positive reporting of social development outcomes.

Second, grand unsupported claims open up federations, clubs and NGOs to the criticism of regurgitating the mythopoetic nature of sport (Coalter, 2013) in order to present the perception that they are socially responsible organisations. With little evidence to support the claims made by clubs and federations, and the propensity to claim outcomes that may not be corroborated, clubs and federations are open to the criticism that the activities they engage in may be self-serving. In addition, they may also be contributing to, and creating a view that social development activities, particularly under the CSR banner, are a smoke screen to disguise unethical practices. For instance, FIFA’s CSR work, in particular its development work in Africa, through the ‘Football for Hope’ and ‘GOAL’ programmes emerged following several high-profile incidents of unethical behaviour which damaged FIFA’s reputation (Jennings, 2006). While unproven, Levermore (2013) contends that senior representatives of FIFA have long been accused of corruption and bribery (Tomlinson and Sugden, 1992) by allocating CSR and development funding to distort the electoral process (Levermore, 2013) to ensure the re-election of President Sepp Blatter, and benefit corporate partners. While such views are yet to be supported or verified, at the very least, the weak institutionalisation, lack of monitoring and evaluation and relatively weak governance of development activities appear to render them susceptible to corruptive processes.

Such views may appear cynical and rather extreme, and may mask some of the positive outcomes that may be achieved through such programmes. Yet vague and grandiose claims made across the football fraternity at the very least, fall foul of displacement of scope (Coalter, 2013). That is, football is implicated in claiming effects that occur at a micro individual level (e.g. self-esteem) can contribute to altering meso- and macro-level structural factors that shape the very conditions the programme recipients find themselves in. This, Coalter (2009, 2013) notes, is a particular problem in SfD work that claims to contribute to international development objectives through sport.

It would therefore appear that football organisations and NGOs claiming to contribute to social development through their organisation need to substantiate these claims more clearly, and present evidence to support them. The majority of Football in the Community evaluations (Brown et al., 2006; Hindley and Williamson, 2013; Parnell et al., 2013), for example, recommend practitioner involvement and increased dialogue between funders, policymakers, and researchers in designing more robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ‘measure’ the social impact of such initiatives. While such rhetoric appears eminently sensible and desirable, such machinations must ensure that schemes do not succumb to the issue of proving something is happening in order to secure further funding for delivery to protect the vested interests of those involved in the delivery of programmes.

Finally, clubs, federations and NGOs providing ‘aid’ or programmes offering significant social and economic development through football can be perceived as a form of interference, control and even modern-day cultural imperialism which perpetuates and reinforces the political and economic dominance of donor states and corporations while simultaneously increasing the
dependency of recipients as an extension of a neo-liberal practice. Such processes, either intended or unintended potentially draws young people into the ‘operational orbit’ (Manzo, 2012: 552) of NGOs and donor bodies through the magnet that is football. Organisations and their programmes must seek to ensure that their intentions to positively contribute to social development through football are not contradicted by unintentionally strengthening the chains of interdependence between recipients, donors and football organisations.

References

[All links accessed April 2016, unless otherwise indicated]


Football and international social development


