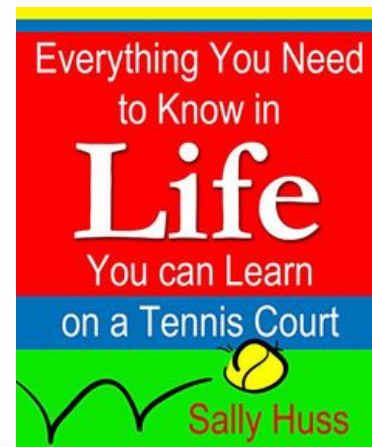
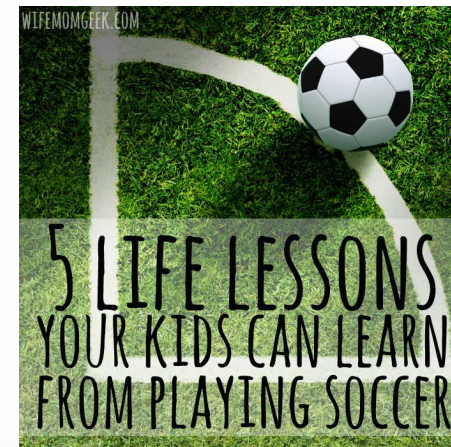


Sport and education in Europe.

Is practice as simple as it is in theory?

Marc Theeboom

- the educational role of sport
 - sport as a context and tool for non-formal education and personal youth development
- policy rhetoric
- scientific insights
- questions



quotes

“Quotation, n: The act of repeating erroneously the words of another.”

Ambrose Bierce
US author & satirist (1842 - 1914)



EU and sport

a strong belief in the developmental role for sport ...



at individual level

*“... an aspect of **socio-cultural development** ...”*

(European Sport for All Charter, 1975, article 3)

*“... an important factor in **human development** ...”*

(European Sports Charter, 1992, article 1)

*“... diverse contributions which sport can make to **personal and social development** ...”*

(revised European Sports Charter, 2001)

*“... a tool for **education and social inclusion**”*

(European Year of Education through Sport, 2004)

*“... reinforces **Europe's human capital**”*

(European Commission's White Paper on Sport, 2007)

at societal level

*“... a strong potential to **contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and new jobs ...**”*

(Developing the European Dimension in Sport, 2011)



*“... plays a **vital role**, not only in individual health and fitness, but in **shaping our wider European society**”*

(European Commission - Sport website)

*“... helps to ensure **sustainable development** and to **adequately tackle the overarching socio-economic and security related challenges facing the EU**, including **migration, social exclusion, radicalisation** that may lead to violent extremism, **unemployment**, as well as **unhealthy lifestyles and obesity**.”*

(EU Work Plan for Sport 2017–2020)



global recognition

*"... an important tool in **helping the United Nations** achieve its objectives"*

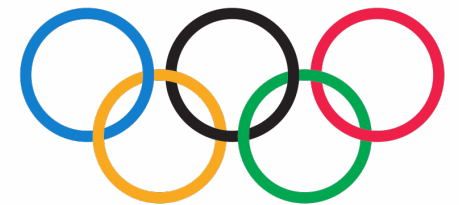
(Ban Ki-moon, former United Nations Secretary-General)

Sport and Sustainable Development Goals



*"The **enormous potential** of sport, its **global reach**, its universal language, its **impact on communities** in general, and **young people** in particular..."*

(Contribution of Sport to the SDGs, the IOC position)



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

sport as a developmental tool

very high potential and ...

... a cost-effective tool ...



*"... the United Nations can make full use of this **cost-efficient tool** to help us create a better world."*

(Ban Ki-moon, former United Nations Secretary-General)

*"... a **low-cost and high-impact tool** in humanitarian, development and peace-building efforts ..."*

(UNESCO website)

*"... a **cost-effective tool** for development"*

(Contribution of Sport to the SDGs, the IOC position)

sport as a developmental tool

nothing new, but ...

an evolution towards:

- more use in (sport) policy rhetoric ... ?
- more (stronger) claims (e.g., SDG's) ... ?
- more activities and programmes in more contexts, more regions addressing more issues and more specific (deprived) target groups (often youth) ... !



Connect as a Team Player and register your organisation!

News



PUBLISHED: 09/05/2017 - 13:44

#EqualGame: A message of inclusion and diversity

UEFA has recently announced a new campaign continuing its 'football for all' message.

PUBLISHED: 09/04/2017 - 14:52

UEFA Foundation welcomes continued collaboration with FedEx in support of 'football for good' movement

PUBLISHED: 09/04/2017 - 12:57

ASA celebrated National Sports Day 2017 by breaking gender barrier

Events



SEP 1 TO SEP 8 BERN & MAGGLINGEN SWITZERLAND

EASM Conference 2017

The 25th annual conference of the European Association for Sport Management (EASM) takes place in Bern, Switzerland, from 1 to 8 September 2017.

SEP 11 LEEDS UNITED KINGDOM

Gender, physical education and active lifestyles: researching young people's experiences conference

SEP 12 TO SEP 14 AARHUS DENMARK

ENSE Sport Summit 2017

E-MAIL OR USERNAME *

PASSWORD *

[Create new account](#)

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Latest in research

DOCUMENT RESEARCH AND PROJECT EVALUATIONS

[Mapping and analysis of education schemes for coaches from a gender perspective](#)

DOCUMENT RESEARCH AND PROJECT EVALUATIONS

[CAFE Week of Action 2017 summary report](#)

DOCUMENT OTHER

[Dissertation: Jumpers for Goalposts: A Study of Refugee Integration in the UK Through Sport](#)

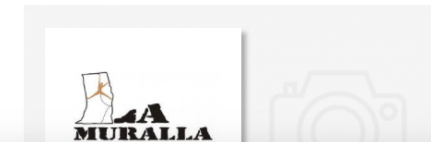
DOCUMENT RESEARCH AND PROJECT EVALUATIONS

[April6 Final Report](#)

DOCUMENT OTHER

[Football as therapy: A year in the life of an inner city project](#)

Featured organisations



various providers and contexts

- physical education and school sport organisations
- sport clubs and associations (grassroots and elite sport; amateur and professional)
- community sport
- sport and adapted physical activity
- social work
- international development NGO's
- employment services
- youth offenders institutions
- special youth care
- mental health care
- ...

various topics / goals

- physical and mental health / health education
- social and moral development
- social inclusion / reintegration / community development
- civic engagement / empowerment / gender equality
- soft/transferable skill development / employability
- intercultural dialogue / tolerance / conflict resolution / peacebuilding
- crime, violence and sexual abuse prevention and treatment
- substance abuse rehabilitation
- homelessness and poverty reduction
- deradicalisation
- environmental awareness / sustainability
- ...

... a powerful and cheap 'social vaccine'?







soft skill development for at-risk youth

what are the theoretical assumptions?

1. through sport involvement they learn soft (or transferable) skills
2. these skills can be used in other domains of life (such as in school, work, family and friends)
3. this will result in better 'integrated' individuals
4. this will result in more 'coherent' communities

“through sport involvement they learn soft skills”

1. at-risk youth participates in sport
2. training is provided by qualified sport coaches that know how to develop these skills among these youths
3. these youngsters will attend regularly

*“these skills can be used in other domains of life
(e.g., school, work)”*

1. at-risk youth goes to school or is working
2. school or work provide opportunities to use and further develop these skills

“this will result in better ‘integrated’ individuals”

1. through improved skills they find decent and sustainable jobs
2. these jobs are located in the areas they live

“this will result in more ‘coherent’ communities”

1. all members of these communities are provided with equal opportunities to be involved in sport programmes
2. all members follow similar trajectories



"In theory, practice is simple"

(Trygve Reenskaug, Norwegian computer scientist,
professor emeritus of the University of Oslo)



*“We mount **limited-focus programs** to cope with **broad-gauge problems**. We devote **limited resources** to **long-standing and stubborn problems**. ... And if there is anything that we should have learned from the history of social reform, it is that **fragmented program approaches** make very **little headway** in solving serious social problems.”*

(Carol H. Weiss, 1973)



scepticism ...

*“... it is evident that much **more empirical research** is necessary if the benefits of sporting participation for young people and society are to become much **more than a theoretical aspiration.**”*

(Bailey, 2005)

*“It is **difficult to analytically separate** the developmental changes related to sport participation from **more general developmental changes** in young people’s lives and from the **influence of social forces and structural factors unrelated to sports.**”*

(Coakley, 2011)

questions

- what do we really mean by “**sport**”?
“... a collective noun that hides more than it reveals...” (Coalter, 2013)
- and by “**development**”? ...
“... deeply complicated and poly-vocal ...” (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011)
- how well do we know how sport is actually **delivered**?
“... ill-defined interventions with hard to follow outcomes ...” (Pawson, 2006)

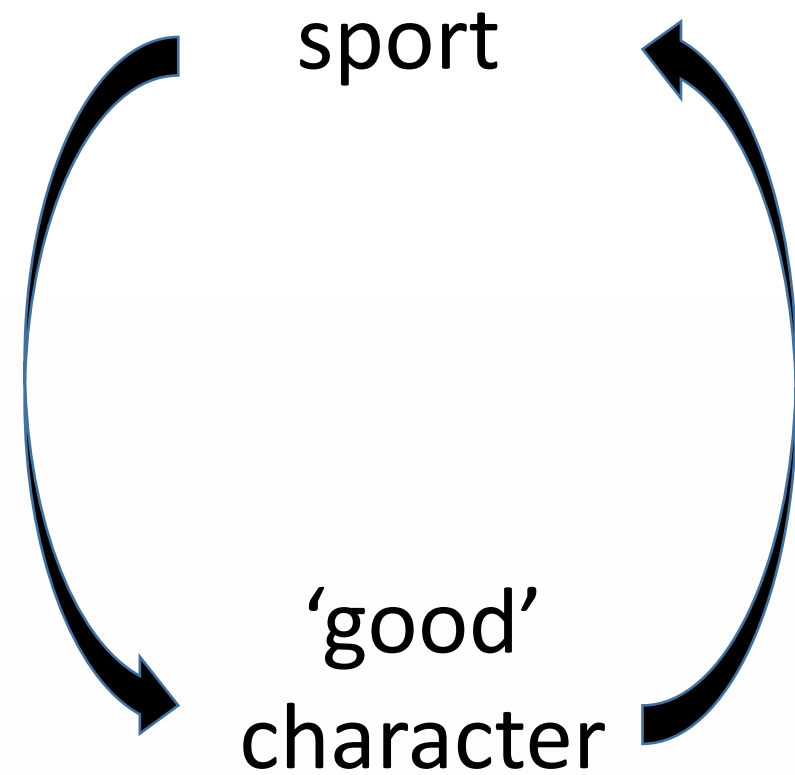
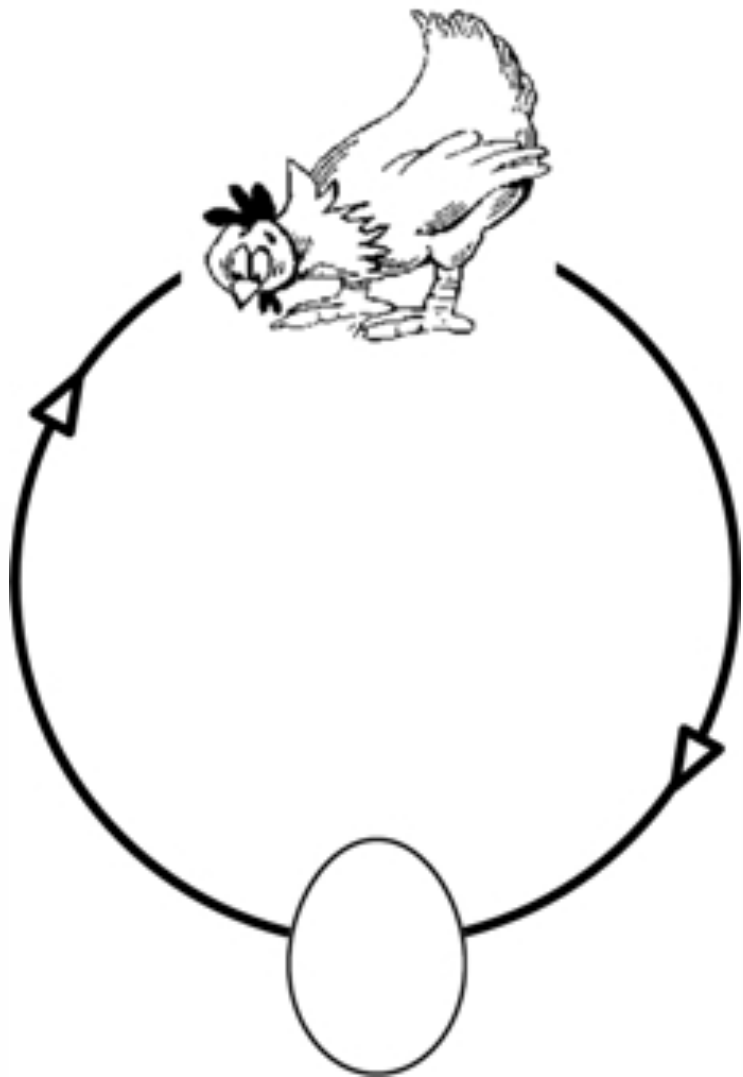
- can we expect **similar experiences in sport** among different individuals?
“What works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how?”
(Pawson & Tilley, 1997)
- how **important** are experiences in sport compared to experiences from **other activities** during interventions?
“The success of any sport-based social interventionist program is largely determined by the strength of its non-sport components...” (Hartmann, 2003)
- why should we expect a **transfer** of experiences from sport to other domains of life?
- how can we **measure** all of this?

how about evidence ...?

among other things, there is the causality issue ...

THE OLD CHICKEN AND EGG PROBLEM ...





type of evidence ...

*“With little more than **anecdotal evidence**, beliefs about the impact of sport in development are driven mainly by **heartfelt narratives**, **evocative images**, and **quotable sound bites** of individual and community transformation, packaged and delivered more often than not by those running the programs”*

(Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011)

*“The relationship between sport participation, educational achievement, social capital formation, and personal success has more often been the focus of **personal testimonials** than social research....”*

(Coakley, 2011)

a matter of conditions

there are 2 types:

necessary conditions: what is needed to start a programme and to get youth involved? (e.g., appeal; accessibility; recruitment; reward system; sustained involvement; ...)



but ...

*“the belief that **sport builds character** is so ingrained that neither providers nor participants feel it necessary **to do anything more** than to provide opportunities”*

(Green, 2008)

*“... **sites** for socialisation experiences, **not causes** of socialisation outcomes ...”*

(Coakley, 2004)

it's not sufficient

sufficient conditions: what is needed to produce desirable developmental outcomes? (e.g., adequate coaching styles; active youth involvement; provision of learning opportunities and relevant experiences; ...)

youth sport coaches' and PE teachers' expertise?

*“... many coaches **do not have an explicit pedagogical framework**. They often base their practices on what they saw their own coaches and PE teachers do, on **their feelings and intuition**, and **their own experiences** as athletes and as coaches”*

*“The **lack of training for social skill development and behaviour** and the context in which youth sport takes place, most likely implies that it is **unrealistic** to expect from coaches/trainers to teach positive social skills to youth in a **very deliberate and systematic way**.”*

(Jacobs, 2016)

*“Governmental and educational policy, curricula and PE teacher education programs in many European countries, including the Netherlands, often do or **cannot equip PE teachers with clear guidelines, curriculum, skills, teaching methods and evaluation criteria** to integrate the social and moral development of their pupils systematically into their lesson plans and activities.”*

(Jacobs, 2016)

*“...there is evidence to generate **continuing disquiet about the situation**. It is clear that in too many schools in too many countries children are being **denied** the opportunities to **experience quality physical education** provision.”*

(Hardman & Marshall, 2005)



sport for fitness

INPUT

FREQUENCY	<i>3x/week</i>
INTENSITY	<i>70% MHR</i>
TIME	<i>30'/session</i>
TYPE	<i>cardio</i>

OUTPUT

sport for fitness

INPUT

FREQUENCY	<i>3x/week</i>
INTENSITY	<i>70% MHR</i>
TIME	<i>30'/session</i>
TYPE	<i>cardio</i>

OUTPUT

sport for development

INPUT

FREQUENCY	<i>?</i>
INTENSITY	<i>?</i>
TIME	<i>?</i>
TYPE	<i>?</i>
OTHER FACTORS	<i>?</i>

OUTPUT

despite the policy rhetoric, it is still uncharted territory ...



sufficient conditions

- a specific approach based on specific expertise
- a **'sport-plus' approach** (Coalter, 2007)
- often found in 'sport-for-change' projects
- much in common with social work
- limited involvement of traditional sport providers

time for some critical (self-)reflection?



- why do **sport policy makers make broader claims** about the developmental role of sport?
- are sport policy makers not **‘trespassing’** into other policy domains by (also) focusing on broader developmental objectives?
- is it **logic** to demand sport providers **to aim for broader developmental goals** (in return for funding)?
- apart from having sport pedagogical skills, is it realistic to expect **youth sport coaches and PE teachers** to also have competences **to effectively and systematically use sport as a developmental tool**?
- ...

EU policy ...

*“... to ensure, through **cross-sectoral cooperation**, the **awareness of other EU policy domains** of the contribution that sport can make in meeting the policy challenges facing the EU”*

(EU Work Plan for Sport 2017–2020)

sport's actual contribution to these challenges?

but before ensuring awareness of other policy domains of the contribution of sport, we might want to know more about:

... how to effectively produce it?

... how to measure this?

in terms of critical success factors and expertise for systematic delivery

EU policy ...

*“... to **strengthen** further the **evidence base** for sport”*

(EU Work Plan for Sport 2017–2020)

Sport and education in Europe.

Is practice as simple as it is in theory?

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<http://sportandsociety.be>