The Uses of Sport for Vulnerable Children: Policies, Programs, and Reflections from the Field

by

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Case: Northern Uganda

Please click on the image to begin the video.
Q1. What are problems with children in your sport program?

- **Telle**
  - Disagreement

- **Cero Lok**
  - Argument

- **Kero/Teko me kom**
  - Physical

- **Gin Marac**
  - Harmful
Gin Marac
(Harmful)
About the Presenter

Associate Professor and Physical Education Program Director in the Department of Health and Sport Sciences.

Senior Research Practitioner for the Bosserman Center for Conflict Resolution.

Extensive field experience in Africa with additional fieldwork in Europe and South America.

Long-term research with the intersection of sport and children and youth in armed conflict in Northern Uganda.

Currently implementing social intervention program – Peaceful Play: Strategies for Resolution to Conflict in Sport – in Northern Uganda.

Collaborations with UN High Commission for Refugees, UNICEF, US Department of State, and various NGOs and CBOs.

Overview of our Conversation

• Understand factors that leave children vulnerable.
• Explore current practices and other policies for working with vulnerable children.
• Examine the intersection of the uses of sport and vulnerable children.
• Explore cases of vulnerable children in one context with children of war and provide examples of sport responses.
• Introduce you to cases involving vulnerable children and explore responses through sport for these cases.
Principle Threats to Children

- Conflict & Violence
- Exploitation
- Congenital & Acquired Anomalies
- Separation
- Disease
- Disaster
A Breakdown of Threats to Children

Children Affected by HIV/AIDS
- 2.1 million children under 15 infected with HIV
- Loss of Education
- Increase Community Stigma
- Sport and education components; awareness campaigns

Child Trafficking and Forced Labor
- The exploitation of children for economic or sexual purposes
- 1.2 million children are trafficked worldwide every year
- Variables lead to exact unknown numbers

Child Trafficking Response Program (CTRP)

Displaced and Refugee Children
- Refugee, internally displaced, and asylum seekers
- Approximately half of the estimated 10.5 million refugees are children
- Varying living conditions – camps, shelters, open spaces
- Play spaces, Teaming Up for Refugees (UNHCR), more formalized programming in developed countries.

## A Breakdown of Threats to Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children With Disabilities</th>
<th>Children Living and/or Working on the Street</th>
<th>Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Armed Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Result of disease, injury, or born with impairments</td>
<td>Homeless with families, work/return home, without parental care or a home</td>
<td>Increased risk of sexual and physical violence, disease, malnutrition, and separation from families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly vulnerable to discrimination, abuse, injury, and abandonment</td>
<td>Highly vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, addictions, and crime</td>
<td>Highly vulnerable to abduction/recruitment into armed groups/forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30% under 5 cognitive impairment</td>
<td>Increased exposure to high risk behaviors</td>
<td>Non-conflict violence: Armed violence that occurs neither in conflict nor post-conflict settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Olympics programs; inclusion training for sport teachers and coaches; unified or parallel competitive leagues</td>
<td>Tanzanian Street Children Sport Academy</td>
<td>Sport as a psychosocial response to trauma, reintegration/social inclusion; community-based programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sport as Part of the Intervention: Where does it fit?

Do No Harm Policies: Links to Sport Interventions

- Participation in coordination groups to learn from other response groups, minimize duplication, and gaps in responses.
- Maximize the participation of local effective populations in planning and programming - build on local capacities and available resources.
- Develop cultural-sensitivity and competence in work/intervention areas.
- Consider holistic approaches to programming whenever possible.

Child Protection and Sport

Priority
- Safeguarding the well-being of children and youth in sport
- Safeguarding the well-being of children and youth through sport

Supporting
- Link sport programming to existing child protection protocols
- Focus on key contextual components and priorities in addition to content
- Education and training to understand local capacity and fill knowledge gaps
- Promote evidenced-based programs and strategies

Developing Child-Friendly Space

Child-Friendly Space

Collaborative development effort; focus on safe/secure space

Address non-formal educational needs

Decrease risk behaviors; increase social skills


Group Exercise

- Each group will receive a small case related to child vulnerability. Read over this case carefully.
- Generate a brief list of the factors within this context that make children vulnerable or face adversity. Share this list with your group.
- As a group, generate one list and rank which your list from most to least prominent vulnerable or adverse factors.
- Describe how sport may address the agreed upon issues of vulnerability. What measure(s) would you would take to create a sport environment that is sensitive to this vulnerability.
Northern Uganda

• Approximately 23 years of conflict.
• Nearly 2 million people forced into internal displacement camps.
• Forced abductions - child soldiering (estimated 66,000 children abducted (SWAY 2006).
• Night commuter phenomenon.
• A collapse of economic, social, and educational infrastructures.
• Low-intensity disputes (e.g., land, domestic, petty crime) still remain potent at the community level (Pham & Vinck 2010).


- Region of conflict for over 20 years
- Over 90% of population lived in IDP camps*
- Approximately 66,000 children and youth abducted by rebel group**
- Upward of 40,000 night commuters***

*Oxfam UG **Survey of War-Affected Youth ***UNICEF
Case: Northern Uganda
Factors of Child Vulnerability

- Conflict
  - Displacement
  - Child Soldiering
  - Abuse
    - Physical, verbal, sexual
  - Disabilities
    - Hackings, Landmine Victims
    - Emotional Disorders
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Night Commuters
Sport as Part of the Intervention: The Case of Northern Uganda

- Community and family supports
  - Child-friendly spaces (IDPs)
  - Community-based sport programs
- Focused, non-specialized supports
  - School-based sport programs
  - Sport as part of holistic psychosocial programs
Peaceful Play: Strategies for Resolution to Conflict in Sport

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Thank You!

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