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OTHERS (BRIEF FIELD REPORT)

Theory and Practice of Olympism in Society: A Case Study Analysis of Tiempo De Juego a Youth Development Foundation in Colombia

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the United Nations (UN) and a number of youth peacebuilding and development organizations around the world have come together with the objective of optimizing their impact in our global society through value-based sport and Olympism programming. This brief field report aims to provide preliminary findings of an internship experience and a case study analysis of Tiempo de Juego Foundation, (TJ) one of the most sustainable foundations dedicated to youth in Colombia. This research-based internship was part of the first author's internship and was conducted in two phases. Phase I, entailed content analysis of TJ structures and programming and phase II, through semi-structured in person and focus groups interviews and researcher's observations in two geographical locations, in Soacha and Santa Marta. Qualitative research methodology was utilized to investigate organizational structures and perceived impacts on young participants. The data collected through this internship will be transcribed, coded and analyzed using scientific methods of inquiry. This analysis of the data will be used for future publications in international peer reviewed journals. The *Olympism for Humanity in Action* programming framework and *Sports for Development (SFD) Theory* will serve as foundations for further investigation and program assessment.

Keywords: Olympic Education, Olympism in Society, Peace Building and Sustainable Development, Applied Olympism, Social Change, Youth Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Since ancient Hellenic times, the Olympic ideal has served as a platform for the promotion of physical literacy and as an educational vehicle for social change, peacebuilding and development. The revival of the modern Olympic Games was also conceived as an educational and peacebuilding project (Naul et al., 2017), where Pierre de Coubertin and the other International Olympic Committee (IOC) co-founders were inspired by Hellenism and concept of the Athenian gym - as vehicles for the development of the ideal and civically engaged citizen (Clastres, 2010). According to the IOC charter, the mission of the International Olympic Committee is to infuse and promote Olympism in our society as a platform that can potentially contribute to the construction of a more peaceful and better world.

"Under the supreme authority and leadership of the International Olympic Committee, the Olympic movement brings together different organizations, athletes and others who agree to be guided by the Olympic Charter. The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to the construction of a better and peaceful world through the education of youth through sports, in agreement with Olympism and its values" (Olympic Charter, International Olympic Committee, 2017, p.17).

In modern times, during the 54th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations a resolution called "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and Olympic ideals" was established (Committee, Olympic truce, Olympic Review, XXVI-30 2000). This is considered a milestone in the strengthening of the relationship between the United Nations (U.N.) and the International Olympic Committee in the context of utilizing Olympism and Olympian Heritage as a vehicle for promoting educational outcomes, peacebuilding and development. During the World Conference on Education and Sport for a Culture of Peace, the General Secretary of the United Nations also mentioned, "Whether through individual or team competition, sport has always displayed the capacity to inspire to overcome national, political, ethnic and cultural differences (Committee, 1999).

Since then, a number of programs and initiatives were developed, and sport for development and peace (SDP) as a line of research has attracted many researchers for further investigation on how sport interventions can affect individuals and communities (Lyras, 2007; Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2017; Lyras, Welty Peachey and Cohen, 2016). Sport however, can lead to both positive and negative outcomes depending on how it is practiced on the field (Lyras, 2007) and therefore, sport and youth development practitioners need to utilize a scientific mindset with ongoing evaluation of the conditions under which Olympism, (and sport) serve as a vehicle that optimizes educational and peacebuilding outcomes, as well as sustainable development goals and objectives. Lyras, through his extensive *Olympism for Humanity in Action* programming and established Sport for Development Theory (SFDT), suggests that the sport experience, can lead to social change and positive outcomes, only if certain elements are being considered as catalysts and vehicles to optimize, personal, educational, social value and sustainable long term impact to participants and their communities. One of the essential steps is to blend of sport/physical activity, education and cultural enrichment content, with clarified intended goals that are linked to positive youth development indicators and outcomes that are relevant to the local contexts (Lyras, 2007; 2012; 2014; Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011).

The U.N. in their last meeting in Kazan, Russia also mentioned the need for more evidence and research. For this reason, recently, the U.N. implemented a new policy known as the Kazan Action Plan, stressing the necessity for, "elaboration of a tool that presents argued evidence on why invest in physical education, physical activity and sport" and in action II, "create common indicators for the measurement of the contribution of the physical education, physical activity and sports towards the objectives of sustainable development and their goals "(United Nations, 2017). In addition to this call, Schulenkorf et al. (2016) suggests that more diversified research is also needed in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Along these lines, Cárdenas (2013) claimed that SDP programming in Colombia is minimal with very few in-depth investigations with significant impact on civil society and non-profit organizations.

Based on these foundations and gaps in knowledge, the first author conducted a month-long internship in Colombia, as part of the requirement for receiving a MA degree in Sport and Olympic Studies at Tsukuba International Academy for Sport Studies (TIAS), a Tokyo 2020 Games Legacy project. The

aim of this brief report is to provide an outline of the first author's¹ internship experience as well as preliminary findings that relate to the organizational structure and programming of TJ. Since this internship report had an extensive field research component, in depth analysis of the data collected during the internship, will be presented at a later stage, as part of the first author's MA thesis and future publications. The current brief report focuses on the Time of Play Foundation (TJ), located in the Altos de Cazucá in the municipality of Soacha. With approximately thirteen years of existence it has the aim of creating opportunities for children, young people and parents at the community by means of physical activity, sports and art to finally achieve a process of sustainable development within the communities where the program is executed (Tiempo de Juego Foundation, 2015).

To better understand the TJ's structures, programming and impact, the current report utilizes the Olympism for Humanity in Action foundations and the elements of effective programming that derive from the Sport for Development Theory (SFDT), (Lyras, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2014). SFDT was established based on grounded theory methodology and based on the Doves Olympic Movement Project (Doves), possesses integrated Olympic values, foundations and principles, as a vehicle for pursuing the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The aim of the Doves Project was to establish theoretical foundations and practical recommendations on how sport scholars and practitioners can design evidence-based Olympism for Humanity in Action programs that by evidence - lead to inter-ethnic acceptance and collaboration and sustainable development goals in contexts with long history of division and conflict (Lyras, 2007, 2012, 2014; Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011). SFDT was initially tailored to the Cyprus context, a country with long history of conflict and division with ten years theory building and theory testing and evidence from the field (2000-2010). Since 2011, SFDT has since been utilized as a framework for assessment of peacebuilding organizations and their impacts, both at the local and international level (Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011), and was extensively used by various scholars, researchers and practitioners to compare and contrast the effectiveness of their sport and Olympism-based interventions on youth development indicators and sustainable development goals in various contexts across the globe (Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2016). SFDT is based on action research and combines different multidisciplinary theories and frameworks that adaptable to different contexts (Lyras, 2007; Marshall and Barry, 2015).

In this sense, both the TJ and Doves Project's foundations share common organizational and conceptual characteristics such as bringing youth, trainers-monitors and parents together in an inclusive environment for the promotion of peacebuilding and development. Based on these principles, the SFDT (Lyras, 2007, 2012, 2014) is considered a solid foundation for program evaluation that can help us better understand how TJ programs are designed and delivered; and further identify elements that potentially optimize perceived impact on their participants. The SFDT provide elements of effective programming based on five components and dimension for program evaluation and comparison. These are the (i) Organizational, ii) the Impact assessment, iii) Sport, iv) Education and v) Culture enrichment-components that synthesize the definition of the Olympic ideal and Olympism in Society (Lyras, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2016).

¹ NOTE: The current manuscript is part of the first author's internship field research experience and MA requirement in Sport and Olympic Studies at the Tsukuba International Academy of Sport Studies, with support, mentoring and supervision from the second author on topics related to Global Sport Governance, Olympism in Society, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development conflict resolution and peacebuilding context analysis and program design and delivery. Due to the exploratory and preliminary stage of this brief report, multiple sources of information were utilized to conduct content analysis of primary and secondary sources of information.

The following section will use the first person to describe the process as well as the steps taken by the first author as part of the internship and research. The selection of TJ, both for my field research and internship experience was reached with consultation received from three world leading scholars and practitioners of youth development and social change with extensive experience in the local context. Consultation with the experts' was via personal interview and online teleconference (via Skype). All three experts suggested Colombia, TJ and the Combinations Foundation as the ideal youth development organizations/models in the Colombian context. A two-month field research with the Combinations Foundation - which was also part of my internship experience and my MA thesis field research project was undertaken in August and September 2018, immediately after the completion of the TJ project. The current report solely focuses on the Time of Play Foundation.

Beyond the descriptive nature of this report, the authors provide preliminary findings on the perceived impact and the few identified organizational factors that foster positive and lasting impact on its participants. The following sections provide a description of the methodology followed before and during the first author's internship; a brief description of the site visit and field experience; followed by preliminary findings and a brief discussion section.

METHODOLOGY

The selection of the internship locations as well as the preparatory procedure with the actual internship experience lasted two months. The research part of this experience was conducted in two Phases (I and II) and were carried out in June and July 2018. The first phase provided an overview of the structure, programs and objectives of the TJ. The second phase is related to the field experience during a month in the organization in Colombia. Following is a detailed analysis of Phase I and Phase II.

PHASE I: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

During June and July 2018, the main activities focused on the internship preparation of the first author, as well as the field research methodology by concentrating on (a) mapping TJ organizational structure, type of programs and objectives of the foundation, (b) refinement of the research methodology (e.g. instrumentation and design) and (c) exposure to the existing body knowledge. Additionally, I (referring to the first author) was in close contact and communication with the board of directors, who helped me understand the type of programs as well as the uniqueness of each TJ location (cities). Secondly, time was spent identifying the origins of potential challenges TJ face, their vision, as well as expected impact in various communities across Colombia. In turn, emails were sent to the organization (referring to TJ) to request authorization to conduct the investigation and the time of my visit during my internship. During Phase I, I also conducted Skype interviews with members of the organization to initiate a pre-internship information and data collection and to receive guidance along with the authorization to start the field research. The intervention plan, goals and vision was explained to TJ officers and I requested them to identify a second location that in their view would provide a richer experience and potentially, more diversified data. In other words, by collecting data and experiences from multiple locations and in various contexts - the impressions and conclusions - as well as the lessons learned would had been more valuable, and potentially produce - more objective findings. The first location was at the headquarters located in Soacha in the department of Cundinamarca, and fell under the criterion of being the ideal model with greater seniority; sustainable structures and processes - and consequently a more advanced design, delivery and evaluation process. The second location, ubicated in the city of Santa Marta, in the

department of Magdalena in the Caribbean region was selected with the aim of understanding different realities in a different context, to potentially identify differences “beyond the ideal”. In this regard, the operating director coordinated the field research process and facilitated the implementation of focus groups that were targeting three different groups: i) the board of directors, ii) the coaches or monitors, and iii) the parents of the participants. Lastly, the TJ operations director provided information on the necessary prevention steps that I needed to consider, avoiding unwanted circumstances by maintaining safety standards during the duration of my field experience and investigation.

PHASE II: TIEMPO DE JUEGO FOUNDATION FIELD EXPERIENCE

The second phase of this project began in July 2018. The internship experience at TJ was divided into three main activities: i) field visit to locations where TJ is implementing youth programming; ii) focus group interviews with parents and board of directors members; and iii) interviews with monitors and former participants. These activities, as described in the previous section, were carried out in two locations: Santa Marta, Magdalena and Soacha, Cundinamarca. Before my departure to Colombia, I prepared a semi structured questionnaire that was validated by the second author of this report. The semi structured interviews included questions that derived from the components of the SFDT as well and its elements of effective programming. The following diagram provides an overview of the locations visited as well as the methodology followed.

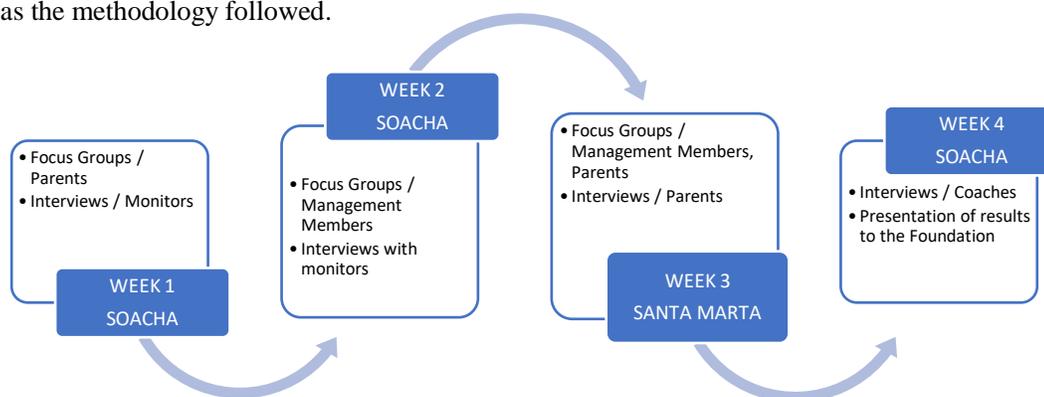


Figure 1. Timeline of Research Experience at Tiempo de Juego Foundation

SITE VISITS

The main objective of the site visits was to observe the application of the curriculum in the field. This was an important component of my field experience because it allowed me to gain trust and create a friendly approach with coaches, parents and participants in the three places. Since this was my first field research experience, this setting made me feel more comfortable during the in-person and focus-group interviews. The same process was carried out in the offices of both locations, where I had opportunity to conduct formal and informal interviews and discussions with TJ board members, who were in charge in those cities. Along with this activity, I collected information about their curriculum for further analysis. Additionally, a central theme of my research was to try to understand how the selected locations were considered sustainable in terms of carrying out impactful activities that had a lasting effect across time. For this reason, it was also essential to observe whether the same model was applied in their curriculum-compared to the first location (headquarters) or whether they have made adaptations based on the local needs and uniqueness of local context.

The chronological order of my visit was as follows: three weeks field experience in the city of Soacha (Figure 2) and combined with content analysis at their local office were I collected data and gained knowledge of their program design, implementation and evaluation methodology. Another central theme, as mentioned in previous sections, was to gain a deeper understanding of their business model and the organizational components that made TJ impactful and sustainable. The second location, Santa Marta (Figure 3), which is located in the Caribbean region, was selected under the parameter of being an organization in formation and my visit took place during the third week of July 2018. During the visit at the second location, the organizers were given access to the variety of curricula and programming provided in different locations in order to select the most appropriate for their local context.



Source: National School of Geography 2011

Figure 2. Location of Soacha (in red)



Source: National School of Geography 2011

Figure 3. Location of Santa Marta (in red)

RESEARCHER’S OBSERVATION, IN PERSON AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

During my involvement at TJ I gained significant experience through attending a wide range of educational activities where I had the opportunity to observe first hand, the application of their methodology in action - on the ground. More specifically, the coexistence methodology that uses football as the foundation of their teaching process is applied in every location across the country. Additionally, it was very important to see how JR adapts to the uniqueness of each context and the facilities they use to carry out their activities in every location. During that time by observation and analysis of the methodology I identified three times in which the pedagogical training session is structured at the field level. During my field visits I conducted focus groups in each selected location targeting parents, board of directors and program mentors and administrators. The focus groups at each location were selected with the primary purpose of providing data that could help answer the research questions related to the impact assessment and educational components of TJ programming. The main tools used for data collection were audio recording, note taking and participant observation. It is recommended to have a facilitator who can also take notes of possible behaviors in body language or

small changes in the participants' voices during the discussion (Nyumba et al., 2018). The suggested time for discussion according to the experts is not to exceed one to two hours of data collection, to keep participants engaged and preserve the quality of the recorded data (Nyumba et al., 2018).

In person interviews were also conducted to collect data from members of the TJ administration that were designated with the task designing, implementing and evaluating the curriculum in each location. In addition, the same process was also performed with former monitors. The in-person interviews had the same semi-structured form. Semi-structured interviews according to Barriball and While (1994), is a method that can be used to explore the perceptions or opinions of the participants on a certain topic that could provide information to find a possible answer. During the implementation of the research methodology, eighteen interviews were conducted at TJ, nine interviews with the administrative staff and nine interviews with their coaches.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Table 1 provides a general overview of the activities provided by TJ headquarters in Bogotá and TJ Santa Marta through the lens of the following three components i) Sport, ii) Education and iii) Culture.

Table 1. Activities Provided by Tiempo de Juego Foundation in Colombia

TIEMPO DE JUEGO / SOACHA/ SANTA MARTA
Sport Component
Through its coexistence methodology in this case TJ has already integrated various elements in there sports programming based on values and learning life skills. The very nature of the coexistence methodology (Método Convivencial) allows mixed teams to be created, with a similar level of competition, creating that the participants are interested in participating in a competitive way, however, very cooperative. On the other hand, they also combine different sports activities such as athletics, basketball, indoor soccer, so they attract different types of participants and members of the community. Along with this, its methodology also includes multidisciplinary educational components which are identified during the three class moments that apply to the participants. The instructors serve as models of positive change for the community and along with it the participants who become monitors during the process which multiplies the impact of the organization in time and space.
In this sense one of the points that can be improved within the sports component is to start using other non-traditional sports activities within the repertoire of activities and can also start with alternative sports such as martial arts, rugby, among others. Another key point is to create alliances with other sports and university institutions to continue improving the content of teaching for students and the level of preparedness of coaches to continue their learning continuously.
Educational Component
Through the life skills that are applied within TJ's coexistence method, an environment that facilitates an adequate learning to create positive experiences in the participants is achieved. By means of the same methodology, objectives can be proposed beyond sporting activities together with the creation of leadership positions within the organization for the participants. Within the organization, participants have access to different talks known as meetings with monitors which promote empathy, critical thinking and creativity in both sports and non-sporting activities. On the other hand, TJ began to see new opportunities with sports or non-sport organizations that facilitate finding investments that increase human, social and environmental capital. This will allow promoting the transfer of learning, values and knowledge in a more effective way within the organization.
Cultural Component
TJ presents within its organization in both locations within its curriculum cultural activities such as dance, music, arts, poetry, among others. Within the same workshops they apply their three-time methodology and apply life skills to intensify the impact. During the existence of the organization they have mixed art and sport as proposals based on relationship with the community where different global and local circumstances can be considered, including both participants and parents in order to improve and attract innovation to the community.
The use of Olympism as a stable framework for the promotion of social change.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STEPS

The above table demonstrates some initial linkages between the TJ programming with the SFDT's elements of effective programming. Further analysis will be undertaken based on the five components of the SFDT- the relationship built based on sport, culture and education which are the fundamental pillars of the posited theory (Lyras, 2007, 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2014, 2016; Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011). An in-depth analysis of all sources of information collected through this experience will be transcribed, coded and analyzed with a more detailed analysis and guided by scientific research methodology of data entry and analysis. This will take place once the whole internship experience is completed during the following three months. Due to the extensive data collected at the two locations, which was followed by a two month-long extensive field research and internship in another youth development organization across Colombia (Colombianitos Foundation) the purpose of this report was to simply describe the internship experience and outline some basic information about the utilized research methodology. The following closing statement comes from the author of the SFDT (second author of this manuscript) captures the philosophical and theoretical context, based on which data from this field experience will be analyzed:

“I strongly believe we should start with the assumption that the purpose, conditions, intentions, and context of the phenomena around us can define either positive or negative outcomes. Therefore, if we refer to a vague statement such as the “power of sport,” we have to start with the assumption that this power can lead to both good and bad. It is therefore essential to integrate theories and wisdom from various frameworks to first gain an intentional, interventionist, inquiry-oriented scientific mindset that will continually be open to identifying and controlling the conditions that lead to targeted objectives and assessing the actual impact over time and space.” (Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2016, p. 133)

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APPENDIX



Image 1. Practice of Soccer with the implementation of the Coexistence Method (Método Convivencia) of Tiempo de Juego Foundation in Soacha, Cundinamarca, Colombia



Image 2. Recreational activities where culture and educational objectives are blended in the field of Tibiqui in Socha, Cundinamarca, Bogota



Image 3. Dance workshops implemented at the TJ location of the Foundation in Santa Marta, Magdalena, Colombia



Image 4. Phase 2 of the session during a football class with the Coexistence Method in Santa Marta, Magdalena, Colombia

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