

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Sport and Development: prospects and limitations

Spring semester 2025, Tuesday, 16:15-17:45

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The efforts to harness sport to address socioeconomic ills in Africa have mushroomed throughout the continent since the late 20th century, with governments, international agencies, nonprofit organizations, and entrepreneurs increasingly promoting sport as a tool to deliver development goals. Sport-for-development (SFD) initiatives have been focused on improving the well-being of communities through increasing social cohesion, peacebuilding, and reconciliation; improving the health of individuals and groups by educating the youth on HIV/AIDS; empowering girls and young women, tackling male dominance, and promoting gender equality; and acquiring financial, social, and cultural capital through success on and off the pitch. Despite the abundance of such activities, their tangible impacts have been a contested topic for debate among scholars. Some view the positive sides of sport-for-development as a “soft” alternative to economic policies that, owing to the popularity of sports, can reach broad audiences. Others, nonetheless, have warned of the neoliberal agenda they promote, by further lessening the responsibilities of governments to their citizens. These disagreements attest to the need for examinations grounded in critical development theories in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the potential and limitations of sports to serve as a conduit for development, as well as to the importance that practitioners in the sector intertwine knowledge that stems from the discipline of development studies.

This course will examine these divergent perspectives of the sport-for-development field in Africa by studying the emergence of the field, surveying selected initiatives that have operated during the last three decades, analyzing their successes and failures in delivering their goals, and exploring the methodologies used to assess the ventures’ impacts. Doing so will open doors for students who are interesting in engaging with the sport-for-development projects in the

continent, and also give concrete tools for students who seek to implement sporting activities in projects that are not necessarily designed to address sporting goals. As such, the course will appeal to a broad range of students. No prior knowledge or experience in sport is required to complete the course successfully.

Course requirements:

- Attendance: Students are required to attend each lesson.
- In-class participation (10%): Students should come prepared to each lesson and be ready to express their observations and critiques of the assigned learning materials (around 60 pages of readings per lesson)
- Online participation (60%): Before the beginning of four lessons, each student will post on Moodle a short answer (around 300 words) to a question on the learning materials. In addition, each student will write two comments (around 150 words) on their classmates' posts, adding additional information based on the course material and/or external material. In total, each student will write **six posts** on the discussion board (each post = ten points).
- Final assignment (30%): Students will write a project analysis of 1,500-2,000 words. Students will analyze a Sport for Development project of their choice by addressing the project's background, activities, impact, and whether and how it embodies the African Union's Declarations on Sustainable Development of Sport. The analysis should focus on an SFD that was not discussed in class. The analysis should be based on at least 10 academic (peer-review articles, chapters, books, etc.) and non-academic (news pieces, organization's reports, etc.) sources. Also, the analysis must include data from an interview the student will conduct with a member of the examined SFD.

Important milestones for the successful completion of the final assignment:

During the first week of June, each student will meet with me, one-on-one, to ensure they are on track with their project. The final assignment is due prior to the last lesson. In the last lesson, each student will give a five-minute presentation of their project.

Course content (subject to changes):

1. 18/3 – What is sports?

Guttman, Allen. *Sports: The First Five Millennia*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2007.
Chapter 1, Rules of the game: 1-6.

2. 25/3 - Why is it important to study sports in Africa?

Vidacs, Bea. "Through the prism of sports: why should Africanists study sports?." *Africa Spectrum* (2006): 331-349.

3. 1/4 - Sport for Development

Kidd, Bruce. "A new social movement: Sport for development and peace." *Sport in society* 11.4 (2008): 370-380.

United Nations. *Sport and the Sustainable Development Goals*. United Nations Publications: 1-17.

4. 8/4 - Sport for Development in Africa

Dubinsky, Itamar. "Sport for Development." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (2021): 1-21.

African Union. "Policy Framework for the Sustainable Development of Sport in Africa (2008-2018)", Part 3: Key Issues and Recommended Strategies: 13-23.

5. 22/4 - Global North-South Cooperation and Critiques

Lindsey, Iain, and Alan Grattan. "An 'international movement'? Decentring sport-for-development within Zambian communities." *International journal of sport policy and politics* 4.1 (2012): 91-110.

Straume, Solveig. "Norwegian Naivety Meets Tanzanian Reality: The Case of the Norwegian Sports Development Aid Programme, Sport for All, in Dar es Salaam in the 1980s." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 29.11 (2012): 1577-1599.

Or

Hasselgård, Anders, and Solveig Straume. "Sport for development and peace policy discourse and local practice: Norwegian sport for development and peace to Zimbabwe." *International journal of sport policy and politics* 7.1 (2015): 87-103.

6. 29/4- Gender Equity

Saavedra, Martha. "Dilemmas and opportunities in gender and sport-in-development." In *Sport and international development*, ed. Roger Levermore and Aaron Beacom (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2009): 139-147 [begin reading from 6.6].

Meier, Marianne, and Martha Saavedra. "Esther Phiri and the Moutawakel effect in Zambia: An analysis of the use of female role models in sport-for-development." *Sport in society* 12.9 (2009): 1158-1176.

Or

Brady, Martha, and Arjmand Banu Khan. "Letting Girls Play: The Mathare Youth Sports Association's Football Program for Girls." *New York: Population Council* (2002): 1-31.

Or

Hayhurst, Lyndsay MC. "The 'Girl Effect' and martial arts: social entrepreneurship and sport, gender and development in Uganda." *Gender, place & culture* 21.3 (2014): 297-315.

7. 6/5 - Health

Mwaanga, Oscar, and Davies Banda. "A postcolonial approach to understanding sport-based empowerment of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Zambia: The case of the cultural philosophy of Ubuntu." *Journal of Disability & Religion* 18.2 (2014): 173-191.

Banda, Davies. "Sport in Action: Young People, Sex Education and HIV/AIDS in Zambia." In *Routledge Handbook of Sports Development*. Edited by Barrie Houlihan and Mick Green (London: Routledge, 2010): 323-336.

Or

Dixon, Marlene A., Ashlyn Hardie, Stacy M. Warner, Emmaculate Awour Owiro, and Dennis Orek. "Sport for Development and COVID-19: Responding to Change and Participant Needs." *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living* 2 (2020): 1-12.

***One-on-one meetings to discuss the final project.**

8. 13/5 - Pacification and Reconciliation

Höglund, Kristine, and Ralph Sundberg. "Reconciliation through sports? The case of South Africa." *Third world quarterly* 29.4 (2008): 805-818.

Collison, Holly, Simon Darnell, Richard Giulianotti, and P. David Howe. "Sport for social change and development: Sustaining transnational partnerships and adapting international curriculums to local contexts in Rwanda." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no. 15 (2016): 1685-1699.

9. 20/5 - Social (re)integration

McSweeney, Mitchell, and Patrick Hakiza. "Refugees, social entrepreneurship, and sport for development and peace." In *Social Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Sport for Development*

and Peace (Eds. Mitchell McSweeney, Per Svensson, Lyndsay Hayhurst, and Parissa Safai). Routledge, 2022. 160-172.

Spaaij, Ramon. "Beyond the playing field: Experiences of sport, social capital, and integration among Somalis in Australia." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35.9 (2012): 1519-1538.

10. 27/5 - Academies

Darby, Paul, Gerard Akindes, and Matthew Kirwin. "Football academies and the migration of African football labor to Europe." *Journal of sport and social issues* 31.2 (2007): 143-161.

Dubinsky, Itamar. *Entrepreneurial Goals: development and Africapitalism in Ghanaian football academies* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2022). Chapter 5.

Wertheim, Jon L., Oriana Zill de Granados, and Emily Gordon. "For African Players, Chasing Hoop Dreams Is a Risky Proposition." *Sports Illustrated* (2020).

https://www.si.com/nba/2020/03/27/nba-african-players-trafficking?fbclid=IwAR3_mDetmYziSvIOf707aqbIaQx03MYdA0v0wijiHx8rtTwXesXe1AOpbZJo

11. 3/6 – Esports

Hayday, Emily, and Holly Collison. "Understanding the potential for esports to support social inclusion agendas." In *Social issues in esports* (ed. Anne Tjønnndal, Routledge, 2022, 131-147.

Bitanihirwe, Byron KY, Tunde Adebisi, Christopher Bunn, Derrick Ssewanyana, Paul Darby, and Paul Kitchin. "Gambling in sub-Saharan Africa: traditional forms and emerging technologies." *Current Addiction Reports* 9, no. 4 (2022): 373-384.

12. 10/6 – New Methods and Directions

Ardizzi, Madison, Brian Wilson, Lyndsay Hayhurst, and Janet Otte. "“People still believe a bicycle is for a poor person”": Features of “bicycles for development” organizations in Uganda and perspectives of practitioners." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 38, no. 1 (2020): 36-49.

Marshall, Jamie, Brendon Ferrier, Philip B. Ward, and Russell Martindale. "I feel happy when I surf because it takes stress from my mind”": An Initial Exploration of Program Theory within Waves for Change Surf Therapy in Post-Conflict Liberia." *Journal of Sport for Development* 1.9 (2020): 1-17.

Or

Thorpe, Holly, Lyndsay Hayhurst, and Megan Chawansky. "“Once my relatives see me on social media... it will be something very bad for my family’": The Ethics and Risks of Organizational Representations of Sporting Girls from the Global South." *Sociology of sport journal* 35.3 (2018): 226-237.

13. 17/6 – From Theory to Practice (training at BGU sports center)

Mwaanga, Oscar. "Kicking Aids Out." Chapter 4: Presenting KAO Movement Games and Activities.

GIZ - Namibia. "Basketball4Life." Chapter 5: Basketball Training. (2016).

GIZ – South Africa. "Youth Development through Football Manual for Gender Awareness." Lesson 7: Transport Gender-specific Issues through Football Sessions. (2011).

GIZ – Africa. "Violence Prevention through Football." (2018).

Additional Drills: <https://www.sport-for-development.com/tools?id=34#cat34>

***Submission of the final project**

14. 24/6 - Conclusion and Students' Presentations