
SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE: A PROGRAM EVALUATION

Abstract ID: EASM-2015-237/R1 - (758)

All authors:

Robert Baker (corresp), Pamela Baker

Date submitted: 2015-03-22

Date accepted: 2015-04-14

Type: Scientific

Keywords: Sport; Diplomacy; International; Program Evaluation

Category: 9: Sport for Good

Synopsis:

Assessing the efficacy of the program evaluation for an international sport for development and peace program.

Abstract:

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine the immediate effectiveness of a specific Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) program. Right to Play International (2008) defined SDP as "...the international use of sport, physical activity and play to attain specific development and peace objectives...", wherein successful SDP initiatives "...work to realize the right of all members of society to participate in sport and leisure activities" (p. 3).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Evidence suggests that development, diplomatic, and peace-building efforts can be bolstered via sport-based initiatives, and that these initiatives have become more prevalent over the past decade (Giulianotti, 2011).

Acknowledging the extensive money and public interest involved in sport, Sanders (2011) suggests that sport-based developmental and diplomatic efforts can serve as a medium through which other agendas are advanced. Diplomatic goals may reflect SDP agendas such as peace-building, cross-cultural understanding, and community development. Sport's utility in enhancing individual and collective understanding makes it valuable in diplomatic pursuits. Grassroots sport diplomacy programs grounded in the principles of Allport (1954) and Beer and Nohria (2000) can affect change. Allport's contact hypothesis suggests that facilitating direct contact among diverse stakeholders can break down stereotypes and stimulate more tolerant attitudes. Beer and Nohria's Theory E represents top-down change, which is economically efficient, but may not yield sustainable results. In contrast, Theory O reflects bottom-up change that often takes longer and costs more, but yields more sustainable results. As sport can enhance meaningful interaction among participants, it can be an effective change agent in fostering understanding at the grassroots level.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Reflecting a larger global diplomatic and social agenda, this program

evaluation examines the Sport Diplomacy Initiative (SDI) program conducted in partnership between the US Department of State and George Mason University. During the 39 month scope of this evaluation, the SDI Sports Visitors Program supported 36 groups comprised of 554 foreign visitors from 47 countries. Visiting athletes and/or coaches in a wide range of sports participated in a variety of cultural, educational, and sport experiences to enhance international understanding and cultural tolerance. Grassroots examples include home hospitality dinners, tours of cities, and attendance at sporting and cultural events. In accordance with the contact hypothesis and Theory O, specific SDI outcome objectives are for participants to: 1) learn about American culture and the American people, the American sport system, diversity and disability issues in inclusive sport, and sport-specific techniques; 2) multiply the impact of the experience upon returning home; 3) value the program experience as a measure of satisfaction; and 4) maintain contact as program alumni.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this program evaluation was to examine the immediate impact of grassroots program interventions relative to program goals on the perceptions of program participants using a pre-post survey design. SDI program objectives are based upon the aforementioned foundations: a) Contact hypothesis- interaction can impact mutual understanding; b) Theory O- grassroots programming affects change; and c) Sport serves as a change agent for broader agendas. In alignment with these concepts of Allport (1954), Beer and Norhia (2000), and Sanders (2011), the pre/post-program survey instrument has seven questions that directly address all program learning outcomes, the intent to engage in the multiplier outcome, and the value (satisfaction) outcome. In addition, the questionnaires include 3 demographic items and one open-ended item. Quantitative data were analyzed at the very beginning and the very end of the program—approximately 14 days apart, to assess changes that might indicate program effectiveness. To determine how large or significant these gains were, effect size calculations were made on a per item basis as well as on the overall total mean scores using Cohen's d. Upon external review, the evaluation system was noted to provide an effective, objective-driven means to assess how the SDI performs in addressing specified program objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants completed both a pretest and posttest questionnaire measuring core concepts associated with participation. After the data were cleaned, 520 valid responses were analyzed. Each item in the questionnaire was measured on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from extremely negative to extremely positive. All items demonstrated gains from pretest to posttest. With an effect size of 1.27, the overall total mean for all seven items combined approaches very large. The findings indicate that over the course of the SDI programming, participants reported significant changes in perceptions relative to measured program goals. Gains were not more significant for some participants than others. These outcomes drive the content and scope of the program evaluation process, and inform program management for subsequent groups.

References:

Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Beer, M., & Nohria, N. (2000). *Breaking the code of change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Giulianotti, R. (2011). The Sport, Development and Peace Sector: A Model of Four Social Policy Domains. *Journal of Social Policy*, 40(4), 757-776.

doi:10.1017/S0047279410000930

Right to Play International. (2008). *Harnessing the power of sport for development and peace: Recommendations to governments*. Toronto, Canada: Author.

Sanders, B. (2011). Sports as public diplomacy. *Sports Diplomacy*, 2(6).

Retrieved from

http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdin_monitor_article/international_sport_as_public_diplomacy