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**Health, Physical Education, Recreation,  
Sports and Dance as a Tool for  
Sustainable Development Goal in Africa.**

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**Journal of International Council for Health, Physical  
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**Editorial**

I am pleased to present this 5th Volume of the Journal of International Council of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sports and Dance (ICHPER.SD African Region) to its esteem and numerous members/readers in the academia.

This edition is in two parts (Vol. 5, No. 1 and Vol 5, No. 2). The articles cover issues in Sports and Exercise Science, Sports Management/Administration, Recreation and Health Education with target on the theme "Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sports and Dance as a Tool for Sustainable Development Goals in Africa". The articles written by emerging, experienced and renowned scholars were peer reviewed and carefully chosen for publication.

I hereby acknowledge the effort of Editors and Reviewers in the rigorous process of the peer assessment of articles. All the papers published in this Journal are refereed by qualified people. I would also thank contributors and hope that they will continue to attend our conferences and send qualitative papers to be published in the Journal of ICHPER.SD African Region.

  
Professor I.O. Oladipo

*Managing Editor*

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**GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS**

The international Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance Africa Journal of Research is the official publication of the International Council of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance (ICHPER.SD Africa Region). A blind review process is rigorously followed. Normally, authors submitting manuscripts are expected to be currently registered members of ICHPER.SD. Exceptional Research from non members may be considered by the editor, for review.

The following guidelines are to assist authors in preparing manuscripts to be submitted and considered through the Journals review and editorial processes.

**Language**

**Topic** Submit all manuscripts in English

Subject matter from all areas of health, physical education, recreation, sport, and dance. Topics of international and African interest (especially cross and multi national) receive high priority.  
Include a section on practical implications and applications of the study or project.

#### *Manuscript Preparation*

Use 7th edition of APA format being sure it is employed consistently throughout the manuscripts. Kindly adhere to this in your next paper.

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Prepare a title page containing each authors name, position, affiliation, address and telephone numbers, and email address .This is the only page where identifying information is to appear.

For multiple authorship, identify which author should receive correspondence from the editor.

Follow the title page with the abstract, and then full content of manuscript. These pages are to contain no information identifying the author(s).

Try to make the manuscript no longer than 10 to 12 double spaced pages (including tables, figures, graphics, pictures, and references).

Include an abstract of between 100 and 200 words. The abstract should be a succinct summary of the information presented in the article.

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#### **Submission Process**

Submit relevant pictures to give greater impact to your manuscript black and white prints are preferred, although clear color prints, slides, and digital pictures can be used.

Submit a computer generated double spaced copy of your manuscript and abstract, in the form of an email attachment (MS Word Format).

Corresponding author is notified of status of manuscript as soon as recommendations are received from reviewers. This process may take longer than might be expected since reviewers are located throughout Africa and beyond.

Order of manuscripts acceptance and publication is not the same since many factors must be considered for each issue.

Send manuscript and direct any correspondence to the attention of the editor-in-chief c/o Dept. of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Ibadan. (Adapted from ICHPER-SD Journal)



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## Re-Engineering Grassroot Sports for Improved Social Inclusion and Transformational Development

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&

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### Abstract

*Grassroot sports have shown to be pre-requisites to outstanding and excellent performance which can be used for community development and societal transformation. Grassroot sports development in Nigeria is given little or no concerns today as this affect national development of youths where many social vices are on the increase and the performance of Nigeria at various international sporting competitions has reduced drastically compared to the past. Sport serves as a tool that unites people together irrespective of race, ethnicity, group, age, social status, education level and also contributes to the overall economic and political development. This paper therefore examined re-engineering grassroot sports for improved social inclusion and transformational development of a nation. Also, the paper examined concept of grassroot sport, growth and development, institutional sports, characteristics and benefits of sport, grassroot sports for social inclusion and transformational development. The authors recommend refocus the priorities of the sports policies to highlight the contribution of sport to achieving the objectives of other policies, including those on health, social cohesion, education, youth, non-discrimination, and the reception and integration of migrants*

**Keywords:** Grassroot sport, institutional sport, sport development, social inclusion, transformation,

### Introduction

It is becoming more evident that the pursuit of sports participation or promotion occupies an important place in the world of today. Some people experience sport as part of their culture, while others dedicate their time to watching sport events. Studies revealed that sports

have become an important part of the social and cultural profiles of many societies around the world (Coakley, 2017; Crossman, 2014; Gasparini, 2008). Due to the changing political and economic environments in the world within which sports organizations operate, sport nowadays has acquired a rather universal character that is argued to unite people across the world more than ever before

Sport and physical education play an important role at the individual, community, national and global levels. As for the individual, sport enhances one's personal abilities, general health and self-awareness. At the national level, sport and physical education contribute to economic and social growth, improve public health, and bring different communities together. At the global level, if harnessed appropriately, sport and physical education could have a long-lasting positive impact on development, public health, peace and the environment (United Nation, (UN), 2005). Sport and physical education provide a forum to learn skills such as discipline, confidence and leadership and they convey core principles that are important in a democracy, such as tolerance, cooperation and respect (United Nation, 2005)

Sport and physical education participation and promotion will provide an opportunity to experience social and moral inclusion for populations otherwise marginalized by social, cultural or religious barriers due to gender, disability or other discriminations. Through sport and physical education, individuals can experience equality, freedom and a dignifying means for empowerment. The physical experience gained during sports participation is particularly valuable for girls and women, for people with a disability, for those living in conflict areas and for people recovering from trauma (United Nation, 2005).

It is worthy to note that Nigeria as a nation has, through the years been guided by well formulated policies for every designed programme with a view to achieving the set goals of such programmes. While this has, for a long time, been the case with most sectors of the Nigerian economy, the Nigerian government's first official policy guideline for the sports subsector was only formulated in 1989 (Aibeku, 2002). In 2009, the Federal Government of Nigeria released the National Sports Policy which targeted year 2020 for optimal development. This was the government's second official policy guideline on the development of the sports subsector in Nigeria. Also, the recent release in 2018 by the National Sports Policy (NSP) draft clearly articulates the vision and direction of the Federal Government (FG) on sports development particularly on grassroots sports. The Federal Government's vision is to "develop the sports sector to a world class level, taking into cognizance sports for all, amateur and professional sports by providing programs and facilities that encourage stakeholders to perform at their best in pursuit of excellence, while benchmarking with best practices for continual development." Three objectives in the National Sports Policy (NSP) pertinent in this paper are; (1) the promotion of school and institutional sports development, (2) the emphasis of sports is an integral part of the curriculum of educational institutions at all levels (Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary), and (3) the identification and development of athletes (Akintokunbo, 2020). The NSP calls on the three tiers of government to put in place frameworks and mechanisms for the identification, training, nurturing, and monitoring of talented young athletes. Despite the robust National Sports Policy and abundance of human and material resources, the country is yet to optimize its full potentials in the area of grassroot sports development which in turn promote social inclusion and societal transformation.



### **Grassroot Sport, Growth and Development**

Onifade (2003) viewed sports as an institutionalized competitive activity that involve vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complete physical skills by individuals. United Nations (UN) Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (2003) defined sport, for the purposes of development, as 'all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organised or competitive sport, and indigenous sports and games. In the assertion of Mars (2003), sports tend to exert more influence on people's behaviour than religion or politics.

European Union (2011) stated that grassroots sport is "participative sport". It is a broad term covering non-professional physical activity, sometimes referred to as 'sport for all'. European Union further stated that, grassroots sport covers all sport disciplines practiced by non-professionals and organized on a national level through national sport. The definition thus excludes individuals who spend the bulk of their time practicing sport, or who earns the bulk of their revenue from the practice of sport. Grassroots sport provides a medium through which individuals who engage in sports can learn fair play and justice, conflict resolution as well as generating sociability and collective effort. The social function of sport relies in the fact that grassroots sport is traditionally organised within voluntary sport associations (mainly small and local sport clubs) where members join a local community hence generating cooperation and collective initiatives and sense of ownership (International Sport and Culture Association, (ISCA), 2011).

The Federal Republic of Nigeria Sports Development Policy (1989) defined sports development as the process of continuous improvement of the sport structure, institutions and programmes in order to create a societal condition conducive to physical fitness for all and the effective functioning and self-actualization. Collins (1995) defined sports development as a process whereby effective opportunities, processes, systems and structures are set up to enable and encourage people in all or particular groups and areas to take part in sport for recreation or to improve their performance to whatever level they desire.

Grassroot sports development means the exposure of young and old, male and female from all corners of the nation in physical activities and sports skills including hamlets and villages (Joseph, 2012). Anyanwu (1999) opined that grassroot approach is the most appropriate measure to sports development in Nigeria as well as any nation struggling to find its bearing in the world of sports. Grassroot approach places emphasis on the youth sport development effort. To involve and expose citizens especially the young ones to grassroot sport development, institutional sports must be put into greater consideration. Grassroots sports are when future athletes begin their sporting journey and through proper organization and administration of sporting event, by sports administrators, most of the athletes are brought to lime light which has brought to the development of grassroots sports (Ladani, 2008)

According to Amuchie (1992), Sport growth and development can be measured in two ways (Vertically and horizontally). It is measured vertically by identifying increase in the number of new sports a country has participated in over the years. Furthermore, it is measured horizontally by determining the levels of frequency of competition in sports within a given period. In addition, sports could also be measured from the number of successes achieved in national and

There is no gainsaying that the 2009 National Sports Policy and a recent draft in 2018, by National Sports Policy of Nigeria on grassroots sports development in Nigeria are conceptually clear and theoretically sound, addressing vital issues that are germane to grassroots sports development in Nigeria. The noble ideals upon which the policy mandate is based are such that would ordinarily elicit a quick and positive response from any well-meaning government, organization and individuals. According to Akpeji (2019) in his statement the Kwara State Deputy Governor, Mr Kayode Alabi during National Youth Games in Ilorin Kwara State 2019, expressed confidence that grassroots sports will be revived with the Minister of Sports' approach, saying that "something must be done by the new Minister of Sports". Athletics is something that is very important. A lot of young people are going into drug addiction right now, but sport is one avenue that can be used to prevent that. While the Minister of Sports explained that grassroots games remain the best means of identifying talents that will represent the country in continental and international tournaments. He further stressed that "the ministry is committed to developing grassroots sports. We want to revive the past where talents are discovered at young age from events like these". Odegbami (2017) on calling of foreign based football players to the national team he said, it is not far-fetched to think that one day, in the not too distant future, Nigeria's Super Eagles will be dominated by a foreign legion of European-born, bred and honed football players, good but lacking the flair, showmanship, individual expressiveness and dribbling skills of the home bred due to the death of grassroots sports in Nigeria.

According to Danagogo (2016), the Minister of Sports said that, Nigeria has blueprint for sports development but lacked the will to implement it. As a minister, he met a well-documented programme for sports development. He further stressed that, after Nigeria's bad outing in the 2012 Olympics, former President Goodluck Jonathan convened a national sports summit, which brought together everyone that mattered in sports. "They proffered solutions. They came up with modalities, blueprints, plans and programmes on what to do to develop sports. "The document contained plan for grassroots sports development, a sustained and well-structured stream of income for sports, even camping (local and foreign) preparations for competitions. He emphasized that, it was worrisome that money meant for preparation of athletes in Nigeria would always be released a week or few days to any competition. According to Ogunseye (2006) Nigeria would have developed her sports by far better than countries like, Kenya, Cuba and Brazil, if we had channeled all the monies budgeted and released for sports into sports development effort.

Moreover, the chosen Ministers and Commissioners of Sports in the Federation and in each state of the country during different political regimes are not sports oriented and lack adequate way to execute and implement sports policy. The professionals who know how to develop sports are really never involved in the implementation stage of our sports policies. At best they are often invited only to come and deliver lectures and read papers at seminars and conferences but their recommendations are never taken seriously or implemented (Ogunseye, 2006)

However, few years after the enactment of this policy, it can be observed that the sports subsector is still bedevilled with challenges bordering on scientific analysis of sports and physical activities. This situation thus calls to question the extent to which the 2009 National Sports Policy of Nigeria is being implemented with regards to social inclusion and transformational

development of the country.

### **Institutional Sports**

Anyanwu (1999) described institutional sports as sports programme organized, administered and practiced in educational institutions from primary, secondary to tertiary levels. This practice provides ample opportunities for young persons in their formative stages of development to acquire and develop the basic movement skills fundamental to performance in sports. The institution of learning provides a good foundation for formal learning and skills acquisition for optimum development

### **Primary School Sports**

The National Policy on Education (2004) made provision for the school curriculum and timetable for sports through the teaching of physical education. The instruction in Physical Education is normally done during the morning schools' periods with or without facilities and equipment. Dankadai (2011). stated that many of our play grounds have disappeared and most schools have no sporting facilities and equipment as was the case before. It is only in some private schools that haphazard inter-house sports are organized on borrowed grounds. Physical education used to be compulsory in primary schools but the educational policy that made the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) the minimum teaching qualification in primary schools is a cog in the wheel of progress in primary school sports. A teacher may possess the NCE certificate without an additional qualification in physical education which enabled Grade II certificated teachers to teach any class subject, physical education inclusive (Joseph, 2012).

The government's takeover of schools has not made the situation better unlike when schools were under the control and management of voluntary agencies. In those days, adequate provision was made in every primary school for the formal teaching of physical activities and drills (Joseph, 2012). It was mandatory for every class teacher, male or female, to take his or her class out for a thirty-minute vigorous physical training. It was a marvel watching teachers in teachers' training colleges in practical classes because of what was expected of them. According to Musa (1999), daily break-periods in schools provided ample opportunities for pupils to participate recreation and organized sports under the watchful eyes of the class teacher or games master/mistress. These are all absent or non-existent presently. It was as a result of these approaches that the Empire Days of old became veritable avenues for the discovery and grooming of talents who later represented Nigeria in international sports competitions. Denying primary school pupils, the opportunity of developing interest in sport amounts to offering them incomplete and inadequate education. (Musa, 1999).

### **Secondary School Sports**

The potentiality of secondary schools' sports to develop Nigerian sport is not in doubt if one gets down the memory lane of the history of school sports. Specifically, soccer had its root in schools where many who represented Nigeria were products of school sports. The likes of late Sam Garba, the Atuegbus, Ismaila Mabo, Jonny Egbuonu, Haruna Ilerika, Tunde Disu, Peter Aneke, Tony Igwe, Late Daniel Okwudili, etc. are shining examples of footballers groomed from school sports (Joseph, 2012). There were series of friendly matches/contests between schools which are extinct nowadays; where such competitions exist nowadays, shameless sports organizers recourse to the use of non-bonafide students otherwise known as mercenaries (Joseph, 2012). Stressing the need for grassroot sport, a one-time national triple jumper, Ajayi Agbebaku opined that it was school sports that brought so many athletes of my generation to

lime-light. He emphasized that we must return to grassroots and school sports if we ever hope to develop our athletes.

School sports today are pathetic. Many schools no longer have interest in school sports in spite of the National Policy on Education (2004) which specified the role sports should play in the education of the Nigerian child. In schools which think about sports, it is only during their haphazardly organized annual inter-house athletic meets that school heads make unnecessary and heavy demands on parents and invitees in well worded addresses. At the end of the day, whatever is realized is not ploughed into grassroot sports development.

### **Sports in Tertiary Institutions**

The history of the development and spread of modern sports cannot be complete without a tribute to the role of educational institutions, particularly at the tertiary levels. Kabido (2001) noted that universities have been centres of intellectual pursuit and scholarship and university authorities have opposed strongly to anything that might detract them from this purpose. Every tertiary institution in the world has her primary objectives as promotion of academic excellence. Any programme that is likely to impede this objective was frowned at. This is exactly what obtains in nearly all the tertiary institutions as far as sport is concerned. Oduyale in Joseph (2012) observed that one major problem facing sports in Nigerian Universities is the uncompromising attitude of some university authorities towards sports. Some lecturers, he pointed out think of sports activities and academic work as diametrically opposed to each. Consequently, students are torn between two loves-academics and sports. Though, sport is of the moment, their educational qualification is a lasting effort which they will not forgo (Jeroh, 2005).

The right caliber of human resources from whom the needed sports talents can be groomed and developed abound in the Nigerian tertiary institutions, but because of the poor state of sports in these institutions due to poor organization and management, the realization of the cherished expectations remains elusive (Anyanwu, 1999). There is the need to go back to university/tertiary sports to produce replicas of the past athletes who are illustrious sons of Nigeria such as the Amus, the Ekongs, the Usorohs, the Ogans, the Ifeajunas, the Urhobos, the Shinabas, etc who represented the country in international competitions. The tertiary institutions through NUGA (Nigerian Universities Games Association), NIPOGA (Nigerian Polytechnics Games Association), and NICEGA (Nigerian Colleges of Education Games Association) need to organize their games without rancour of complaints of the fielding of non-bonafide students. For instance, in Australia, universities contributed so much to the development of sports in respect to mass participation and elitist sports. Through formation of Sports Clubs run by students, the sporting life of Australian was greatly influenced. As at 2004, there were more than 60 Sports Clubs affiliated to the University of Sydney and that, the University of Sydney alone produced 45 athletes from Sydney University Clubs, which represented Australia at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games (Geogakis, 2006)

### **Club/Association and Community Based Sports:**

Previously in Nigeria, there were the Nigerian Police Games as well as the Armed Forces Games where stars like Joseph Adeola, Alfred Belleh, Edward Akika, David Ejoke, Sunday Oyarekhua, among others were discovered who represented Nigeria in international sports competitions. The materials for this arm of the sports development effort abound through the existence of various sports associations and clubs. The Youth Sports Federation of Nigeria (YSFON) has

done a lot in the discovery of talented footballers from the grass root. The All-Nigeria Open Athletics Championships brought the best from the Police, the Army, the Customs, and the Prisons in the late seventies (Joseph, 2012). There is the need to resuscitate such competitions so as to raise standing standard teams in all sports.

### **Grassroot Sports for Social Inclusion and Transformational Development**

Grassroot sport can be used to achieve success and self-realisation through competition and perhaps the biggest benefit from grassroot sport is that it promotes social inclusion amongst the disadvantaged. The concept of social inclusion denotes eliminating social exclusion and celebrating diversity, as opposed to tolerance and assimilation, to wit that everyone has the same human rights, social privileges, civil and constitutional liberties and rights, such as equal access to education, health care, and employment. Inclusion focuses on helping everyone and leaving no one behind. As defined by the Indian, Nobel-Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen: "Inclusion is characterised by widely shared social experience and active participation in society, by widespread equality of opportunities and life chances available to people on the individual level and by all citizens reaching an elementary level of wellbeing" (UNESCO, 2008).

Despite the focus of UNESCO in promoting social inclusion in all aspects of life and sport inclusive, the definition and meaning of social exclusion given by European Commission (1993) as 'multiple and changing factors resulting in people being excluded from the normal exchanges, practices and rights of modern society' still persist in Nigeria as some people are deprived of equal opportunities in the society and sport inclusive. The grassroot sport are not developed nowadays to include all persons. The wealthy and the rich people in the society are more privileged and opportune to participate in various sports due to the ability to afford some sport supplies for themselves and their folks. This social exclusion affects individuals and groups, particularly in urban and rural areas, who are in some way subject to discrimination or segregation; and it emphasises the weaknesses in the social infrastructure and the risk of allowing a two-tier society to become established by default' (Commission of the European Communities, 1993).

According to Curatolo (2014), the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported that participation in sports was shown to increase social inclusion as well as decrease social exclusion. Sporting programs provide vulnerable and at-risk people with a place to go to which is not only physically safe from conflict around them, but also emotionally safe. The programmes can also provide a welcome relief from daily struggle. For people who have been displaced, who become disaffected or simply disengaged from their community, belonging to an ongoing sporting program or team can be a lifeline, especially during times of chaos where routine and stability are desperately needed yet hard to find.

The Australian Football League (AFL) run some very successful multicultural programmes which have grown in size and opportunities. They now offer ongoing football programs at the local level as well as one-off programs, such as the multicultural cups. The AFL has realised the potential for talent and skill amongst this group of people and is now actively supporting player development and recruitment through these multicultural programs, and some of these recruits are now playing at the elite level of AFL and making a good career from it. These players are seen as role models for kids from migrant backgrounds and take on a cult (Curatolo, 2014). Bonias

(2019) who interviewed seven Paralympic athletes and World Champions. According to the findings, the athletes all highlighted the significant role and contribution of sport in their social inclusion and integration, also acknowledging that sport gave meaning to their lives; it gave them a reason for living, getting up in the morning and a purpose in life; it gave them an identity, a social identity and a sport identity. Envisaging this, grassroots sports can therefore be a tool to use to improve social inclusion and social belongings in Nigeria.

According to Coalter and Allison (1996), assumptions made about sport's potential benefits have been accompanied by a shift in political rhetoric and sport policy. In the UK during the 1980s and 1990s, when economic concerns dominated, sport was considered almost exclusively in terms of its regenerative impact, i.e. how it could increase income and jobs. Yet in contemporary politics, sport is now also analysed in terms of its potential to promote tolerance, improve health and develop social skills, as well as to combat poverty, unemployment and social exclusion (Committee for the Development of Sport, 1998). Also, it was noted that the impact of sport, particularly football, extends to spheres that are hard to reach through more traditional political activities (Football Task Force, 1999).

Curatolo (2014) stated that in remote Indigenous communities in Australia where infrastructure and funding for long-term projects to address systemic disadvantage and risk factors are often unreliable, inconsistent and inappropriate, providing structured locally relevant sports and recreation programs can be useful in building a sense of purpose, hope and belonging in these communities". When sports programs are structured, work within the needs of the relevant group, provide rules, boundaries and are ongoing, then the results will build cohesion and promote social inclusion for the participants of the programmes as well as the wider community through the flow on effects.

Sports has the power to transform individuals, communities, societies, states and countries. By putting sports to best use, one can realize benefits such as better physical and mental health, learn responsibility and teamwork, and build an overall positive self-image. On a bigger scale, sports can impact areas such as education and health, prevention of violence, peace-building, good governance, social inclusion, economic development and gender equality. Sport offers the opportunity for physical exertion but is also a wonderful forum for social interaction. Evidence from the field clearly indicates that sport improves personal and social skills, such as cooperation, trust, respect and fair play (UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (2003). Sport can also provide a platform to develop leadership skills, confidence and the social skills to work as part of a team. Grassroot Soccer's African Leadership Programme (ALP), set up with funding from the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, empowers young people across Southern Africa to become future leaders for the continent. Through a coaching and training programme, participants learn key skills in leadership and management to enable them to make a difference in their communities. Quality, well-structured sports projects, delivered by well-trained coaches, can multiply these personal benefits to bring about positive social change on a large scale, ranging from improved school attendance (Kay, 2009) rates to increased opportunities for people living with disability (Fukuchi, 2007).

Sport can be seen as the only language that connect, unite and bring the world together. Onifade in Joseph (2012) commenting on role of sports says, "Sports has become a social phenomenon of modern times in all ramifications of education, politics economics, arts, the mass media, foreign

policy, ideological propaganda, political ideology and diplomatic relations. Success in sport also has an impact on a country's prestige, status and respectability as well as being an instrument of patriotism. Countries also use sport to revive severed relations or strengthen existing ones. Mandela (2000) said "sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else can. Sport can awaken hope where there was previously only despair".

Through grassroots sport and physical education, individuals can experience equality, freedom and a dignifying means for empowerment, particularly for girls and women, for people with a disability, for those living in conflict areas and for people recovering from trauma (Beutler, 2008). Darnell and Black (2011) recognizes that the 'power' of sport signifies not only the potential for social and political emancipation but also for the marginalization and dominance of groups based on geography, politics, and economics as well as gender, race, sexuality, class and ability. Based on research into sport-based crime prevention initiatives in the United States and the related work of other scholars (Black, 2010; Darnell, 2010a, 2010b; Giulianotti, 2011; Guest, 2009; Levermore & Beacom, 2009a, 2009b), Hartmann (2003) identified several key elements required for effective sport-based social intervention and most basic is the recognition that sporting activities play a crucial role in outreach, recruitment, and retention of participants. Sport provides the "hook" that draws otherwise disconnected, marginalized young people into a program, and then that gets them actively involved and invested in its activities taken as a whole.

Sport can reinforce interaction between communities, peoples and societies and hence plays a part in maintaining open channels of communication in open or dormant situations of conflict. In conflict and post-conflict situations, sport can support building a beneficial outlet for people affected which is directed towards peaceful reduction of hostilities and tensions. In addition, sport can contribute to managing trauma after natural disasters or violence in refugee camps, for instance (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2005).

Darnell (2010b) has postulated that sport is popular in development circles for precisely its reproductive qualities. Given its history and ideology, sport is easily understood by the dominant class as a socially beneficial and culturally normative "character builder" and because the symbols, emotions, and dominant meanings of sport-based development "motivate individuals to transform life through sport-based processes of body management". Woodhouse (2009) highlights the importance of innovation and creativity in peace building and proposes the use of cultural tools, including sports, as a way to energizing the field of peace studies and conflict transformation. In the updated version of his Contemporary Conflict Resolution (2011), he elaborates on the importance of sport in peace building processes and highlights the current initiatives between academic institutions and football clubs to promote peace and education programs. Recognizing social inequalities and seeking to reshape social order, sport takes on a more radical social change emphasis, focusing on the empowerment of otherwise marginalized through an understanding of the broader structures of power and privilege within they are contained (Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011).

Sport is part of the society both as an educational fixture and as an entertainment enterprise. Sport forms part of human and social development, it can contribute to social cohesion, tolerance and integration and it is an effective channel for physical and socio-economic development

(Onifade, 2001). Sport is a catalyst for economic development. Individually, each of the various sectors of the sports economy can create activity, jobs and wealth. When several are combined together into a single strategy, it is possible to achieve additional economic gains because of the synergies that result. The local economic potential of sport is further enhanced when supported by national 'sport for all' strategies.

Oloyede (1999) conducted research to determine the role of sports in the Universal Basic Education and found that sport has the following functions:

- i. That sport releases emotions, acts as a safety valve and relieves aggressive tendencies
- ii. That sport offers opportunities to be recognized and to express one's individual qualities
- iii. That in a society where deviance is prevalent, sport provides a means of control over people.
- iv. That sport serves as a means of socializing those individuals who identify with it.
- v. That sport results in social change, introduces new behaviour patterns and changes the course of history; and
- vi. That sport creates a communal spirit that brings people together in search of common goals.

As stated in the Report of the Vision 2020 given by National Technical Working Group on Sports Development (2009), the leading sports countries have established special structures of facilities, funding, training, high performance centres, nutrition, medicine, and sports sciences through schools, including special schools, training camps, scholarships and various incentives for their sports development which include grassroots sports. The leading countries in the various continents are Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Egypt and South Africa), Americas (USA, Cuba, Brazil, Jamaica and Canada), Asia (China, Japan, Korea and India), Europe (Great Britain, Russia, Germany and Spain) and Oceania (Australia). National Technical Working Group on Sports

Development (2009) further stated that global developments that have impacted sports include:

- a. Concentration of some countries in certain sports
- b. Emphases on early identification and scientific training for athletes and coaches
- c. Change of nationality by some competitors which had produced international honours for some countries that have no tradition of winning in those sports.

In the mentioned countries, sports have become major contributor to social and economic development.

We can no longer underestimate the potential of modern sports as an industry that can positively impact on the social, economic and political parameters in the process of nation building. The African countries have taken little effort to acquire the benefits accrued to sports as a result of lack of development in sport (Oloyede and Afolabi, 2011). In order to tap the benefits of sports and use it for Nigeria's transformation, relevant grassroots sports development programmes have to be designed and properly executed. Stakeholders from the tiers of government, international development agencies, private sectors, non-governmental organisations and communities are needed in promoting programmes, which harness the power of grassroots sports. Collaborative efforts are necessary to ensure systemic and structured delivery of grassroots sports-based development programmes across communities.

### **Characteristics and Benefits of Sport**



Harnessing the power of sport, a publication by the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG) (2008) identifies additional benefits of sport as:

**(a) Sport is universal**

Sport, games and physical activity in general are activities present in virtually every society across the globe. The popularity of sports transcends political, national and ideological frontiers and it is a practice enjoyed by spectators and athletes alike.

**(b) Sport's ability to connect people**

One of the most important attributes of sport is its capacity to connect peoples and communities in an extremely effective manner. These communities, when they are inclusive, turn into important sources of social networking fostering community capacity to work cooperatively.

Furthermore, sport has emerged a global mass entertainment and has become one of the most far reaching communication stages in the world today.

**(c) Sport's potential to inspire and motivate**

By shining light on what people can do, sport inspires and motivates individuals. In addition, sport promotes self-esteem, physical and mental health and fosters positive connection with others (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2008).

Furthermore, a four-year study headed Coalter and Taylor (2010) from Sterling University and conducted by the charity International Development Through Sport (IDS), the UK-based charity Comic Relief and the organization UK Sport International, was done to test the hypothesis "sport contributes to personal development and well-being in disadvantaged children and young people". The investigation, which analyzed the effectiveness and impact of eight organizations from Africa and India employing sports in different ways, was released and among other findings, it concludes that:

- i. On the area of personal development, sport programs do have an impact on the self-esteem and perceived self-efficacy of participants as the majority of them underwent a transformation in their self-evaluation. Most interestingly, the scores of those participants with the lowest self-esteem evaluations at the beginning of the research, increased significantly by the end.
- ii. With regard to gender equality and women's empowerment, attitudes towards women's involvement in sport and education were reinforced across participating programs.
- iii. Research concluded that sport proved to be an effective medium for the dissemination of information about HIV and other health-related issues to young people.
- iv. Participants reported that sport trainings had boosted their confidence both through meeting and addressing issues with peers and coaches as well as by developing their leadership skills (Cotalter and Taylor, 2010).

## Conclusion

It is evident that grassroots sports in Nigeria has not attained expectation and fulfilled the objectives and the 2009 National Sports Policy towards vision 2020 of all-round development, which is disheartening to the social inclusion and transformational development of the country. The grassroots sport in the country which was known to be an impetus from elementary, secondary, tertiary institutions and club associations for social inclusion and transformational development in the country is a thing of the past. These mentioned channels are still the best ways of reaching the populace and the citizens for the betterment of achieving the robust and clearly stated 2009 National Sports Policy for all round development. Until the grassroots sport is revived and re-engineered that the country will have a balanced and well distributed society and stabilized economy.

### Recommendations

To this end, the authors recommend the following:

1. Refocus the priorities of the sports policies to highlight the contribution of sport to achieving the objectives of other policies, including those on health, social cohesion, education, youth, non-discrimination, and the reception and integration of migrants
2. Strengthen the school sports and clubs association at every level to involve every citizen irrespective of age, gender, ethnic, education, socioeconomic status among others to promote grassroots sport.
3. Strengthen the collaboration of public institutions working in these areas, especially when they are in contact with young people and vulnerable groups and increase the synergies between their activities and those of sports organisations so that the various stakeholders play an active role together in combating all forms of discrimination in sport.
4. Physical education subject should be channeled to achieve the prioritised objectives of the policy at all level of education to promote grassroots sport for social inclusion and transformational development.
5. Allocation resource to the sport sector should be overhauled and utilized at every point and level of needs.
6. Public authorities should in particular involve schools and universities sports to a greater extent in the promotion of "sport for all" in cooperation with sports organisations, especially in order to reach a younger population and reduce "dropping out of sport"
7. Involvement equality bodies and national human rights institutions to a greater extent in combating discrimination in sport, promote their co-operation in running awareness-raising activities, and authorise these bodies to participate in legal actions brought against perpetrators of discrimination
8. Recognize women athletes' achievements and encourage young women to participate in

sports; seek to reduce gender-based remuneration gap and award disparities

9. Significantly increase in media visibility of women in sport, notably by devoting more public service broadcasting air time on women's sport and by promoting a non-sexist view of sport
10. Commit to eradicate all forms of discrimination and stigmatisation based on gender, gender expression or sexual orientation in all aspects of sport, including policies, practices, administration, funding, programming and training; in particular, hold individuals accountable for the use of sexist language in sports competitions
11. Intensify efforts towards the inclusion in sports activities of person with disabilities and support a wider media broadcasting of sport events involving them

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