

CURRENT AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN SPORTS MANAGEMENT



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Negativity of Muscle Drain in African Sport Development

Dr. Adisa OLAWUMI*

Introduction

The economic importance of sport in the World today cannot be overemphasized. According to International Platform on Sport Development (2007), sport can contribute to economic development by creating additional source of income; such as manufacture of sporting goods, the development of Sport-related services, infrastructure or sports events. This corroborates Chapellet (2005) position that, sports contribute two percent to gross domestic products in industrial countries. International Platform on Sport Development (2007) continued that, sport can also produce indirect economic effects by improving the overall health of a community that is physically active, thus contributing to reduction in spending on health as well as increasing labour productivity. Sport has grown to constitute a considerable sector of the economies of most industrialized countries. It is therefore necessary to determine how such economic potentials can be harnessed so that benefits may be felt by both developed and developing countries.

According to Andreff and Szymanski (2007), there are a number of economic concerns with regards to sport's under development in developing countries, although most issues have remained unheeded till today in the economic literature. The gap between developed and underdeveloped countries has become so wide that, the latter have lost any hope of closing it in terms of either sport performance or the organization of big sports events. Brevik (2005) opined that, while the

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world is seeing a growing number of extraordinary athletes - men and women born in the developing nations - setting new international records and distinguishing themselves in many arenas of sport, it is a fact that almost all of the events are taking place in the rich parts of the world. About thirty (30) industrialized countries are hosts to 95% of all international and world sport's events each year. Of the 18 football World cups during the last 75 years, it is only 6 that have been held in developing countries and these took place in Latin America. South Africa is the first African country to host a World Cup which was in 2010, while the 2014 edition will also take place in Latin America - Brazil.

Characteristics identified with underdevelopment of sports in developing nations like Nigeria are that, apart from government being the main sponsor and patron of sports activities, there are also difficulties in keeping talented athletes at "home". Most developing countries, especially African countries including Nigeria experience, economy as well as talent loss in sports due to high labour migration of professional athletes to the developed countries like America and Europe.

Muscle drain, which is migration of athletes from their home countries once their sporting abilities are of a standard at which they could consider competing internationally is not without its problems (The International Platform on Sport and Development, 2007). According to Andreff (2004), muscle drain undermines the sporting substance of developing countries; Secondly, it diverts the most talented sportsmen and women, those few who have had the opportunity from the rare domestic coaches and sport facilities; thirdly, in some cases it erodes the capacity of the home country to use its most talented athletes in international competition, a fact that partly explains the poor performances of developing countries in World Sport events.

The impact of sports on individuals; private and public sectors as well as the government cannot be overemphasized (Aiyejuyo and Ayoade, 2002; Abone 2003), but the non-seizure of opportunity that abounds in the application of the economic indices on developing nation's sport is having great negative impact. This is obvious in the 'Muscle Drain' (by analogy with the well-known brain drain) that

many developing nations are experiencing. Due to low level of sport development in Nigeria, the country, like most other developing nations, exhibit an increasing outward international mobility of their most talented players towards North American and West European Professional leagues. The International Platform on Sport and Development (2007) opined that, in developing countries, athletes and talented sportsmen and women tend to leave their home countries once their sporting abilities are of a standard at which they could consider able to compete internationally. The migration of athletes (which is particularly common in football (Soccer or events) is often referred to as muscle drain.

Types of International Athletes Mobility

Experts have identified three major types of international athlete mobilities and these are as follow:

1. North –North Migration
2. South – North Migration
3. International Teenage Transfer

North–North Migration: North–North Migration could be considered the movements of athletes across Western European countries mainly within the EU, North American and Japanese professional leagues and championships.

South–North Migration: this second flow of movements depicts movements of athletes from developing countries to developed market economies in North America, Europe and Japan, in others words the South-North migration. It is on record, even with empirical evidences that, many African talents, (including Nigerians) are affected in this type of flow. Andreff (2009) stated that, empirical evidence shows that muscle drain is a net South to North flow, in other words the South is net exporter of talents while the North is net importer. Andreff use France as a typical case in point where 13 out of 45 foreign players who entered the French Ligue 1 in 2007-2008, were from developing countries while 3 out of 54 players who moved abroad left for a developing country. The balance is a net import of 10 players from developing countries. Seen from the South, a similar orientation is witnessed. From 1989 to 1997, over 2,000 Brazilian

players migrated to different European football clubs, and there were still 654 who moved in 2002, increasing to 857 in 2004. Their first destination was Portugal, then other European countries. Hundreds of African and other Latin American football players are transferred to European clubs every year. In Nigeria, from 1980's till present time there has been tremendous migration of talented athletes to Europe under many disguises. ranging from economy, education, naturalization, relocation, advance training to even trafficking.

The same South-North muscle drain is observed from developing countries to North America. Just to mention a few of them, 1,300 players in the Major League of Baseball are citizens from the Dominican Republic; a number of African and Latin American players operating in the National Basketball Association; and Czech as well as Russian superstar players are often hired by National Hockey League teams (Andreff, 2009).

Since the late 1980s, post-communist transition economies from Central Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union have become significant athlete net exporters so that they can compare – and indeed compete – with developing countries in the global labour market for sporting talents. For example, from 1990 to 1997, over 600 professional football players, 520 ice hockey players, 300 handball and volleyball players, 100 ice skaters and 20 coaches moved abroad from the former USSR. With economic recovery in Russia, nowadays a reverse flow has emerged from importing foreign players in the best performing Russian clubs, like the 2008 UEFA Cup winner, Zenith St. Petersburg.

International Teenage Transfer: International teenage transfer has not only be a major controversial international athlete's mobility but also a major concern for government all over the world on the issue of modern day slavery, abuse and trafficking. The most affected countries on this issue are the developing countries, particularly those of African extraction.

The FIFA rules that forbid transferring from abroad, football players below the age of eighteen was adopted in 2001. Despite FIFA rules that outlawed teenage transfer, evidence still abounds that many agents are indirectly engaging in it. Since 1990s till date, all in the name of sport development, many Sport Academy spring - up in

Africa, particularly Nigeria with the aim of helping the country to develop and catch young talent who could conveniently combine education with sport early enough. However on the surface the idea is a lofty one, but beneath and with a cursory look, there is clever 'big black market' going on.

Most of these academies usually have affiliations with either foreign clubs or sport academies. It is unto these foreign clubs or academies that these talented teenagers, after being nurtured and nourished are transferred through the back door; hiding under training tours and trials or competitions. In most of these cases National Sport Associations and other regulating bodies like the Sport Ministry or Commission do not usually know of such transfer.

Andreff (2009) give a vivid account on this by saying that; indeed, such transfers emerged in the late 1980s, but importing teenage players from developing countries were boosted by liberalization and the resulting globalization of the football labour market after 1995. Many clubs increasingly looked for substitutes to more mobile European superstar players by recruiting younger and cheaper talents from the Third World.

During the 1990s, 4,809 foreign players; aged from six to sixteen, originating from Latin American and African countries were found in Italian football clubs. In the Netherlands, 33 football clubs have been sued by immigration offices for illicit importation of Latin American and African players. Belgian football clubs were – and are still being utilised as 'training hubs' for training African players before their transfer to major European leagues. In the year 2000, 15 young African players lodged a complaint in the Belgian court against professional clubs and players' agents, complaining 'trade and trafficking of human beings' – a case that they eventually won (Tshimanga Bakadiababu, 2001).

Many of the young African players are often spotted by agents at the African Cup of Nations – which is nicknamed; the 'cattle fair' and are invited for trials in European clubs, and recruited when the trial is successful. When a trial is unsuccessful, they are often abandoned by both clubs and agents without a labour contract for a return airplane ticket to their home country. Thus, they are left *de facto* in a position as illegal migrant workers and, sometimes, are targeted by the police.

Some cases caused so much outrage in France that, the then French Minister for Sports, Ms. Buffet, commissioned a report (Donzel, 1999) which confirmed the existence of extremely bad practices by clubs and players agents with regard to African teenage players. After a decade of such controversial teenage transfers, UEFA reacted in 2001 with new regulations, article 19 of which came up with the statement that, "international transfer is allowed, only if the player is at least eighteen". However, UEFA allowed three exceptions which today leaves the door open to the regulation being circumvented as follow:

1. teenage transfers are allowed when their parents moved abroad for reasons that are not linked to football. Some agents use this to smuggle young talented African players abroad by making false declaration of foster parents for such young players;
2. when it is a transfer across EU countries; and
3. when a teenage player is living close to the border of a foreign country.

As a result of this, teenage muscle drain has not been eliminated even though it is less publicized even now that it is clearly illegal. However, one can still find some cases reported by the press. An example in 2002 is that of Isa Mohammed (Nigeria) who was transferred to a first division Polish nursery club, and his transfer was supposed to be the rocket pad toward his international career in a major European football league. Unfortunately, he was injured, then skipped away from the team and eventually abandoned by the club.

Reasons for Muscle Drain

There are many reasons for migrations in sport; some are for economic reasons while others are not.

Non – Economic Reasons:

Dual Citizenship – According to Majani and Majani (2013) Under Bye-law to Rule 42 of the Olympic Charter, "1.A competitor who is a national of two or more countries at the same time may represent either one of them, as he may be elected. However, after having represented one country in the Olympic Games, in continental or regional games, or in world or regional championships, recognized by the relevant IF (international federation), he may not represent another country unless he meets the conditions set forth in paragraph

2 below that apply to persons who have changed their nationality or acquired a new nationality.”

However, subsection 2 of rule 42 goes on to provide that, such an athlete can represent another country “provided that at least three years have passed since the competitor last represented his former country” and that, “[t]his period may be reduced or even cancelled, with the agreement of the NOCs and IF concerned, by the IOC Executive Board (...).”

This ostensibly is a window through which young and inexperienced athletes from the developing countries could potentially exploit to leave their mother countries with the assistance of unscrupulous agents. Many African athletes who have excelled at the world youth championships have taken advantage of this provision by changing their citizenships, only for things not to turn out as expected.

Similar provisions have been enshrined under rule 5.1 of the IAAF Competition Rules 2010-2011 which despite requiring its members to be represented by Citizens of the Country or Territory which the affiliated Member represents, provided that having once represented a Member in an International Competition, an athlete can only thereafter represent another Member in an International Competition after three years following the date of the athlete’s acquisition of new citizenship.

According to the IAAF statistics, the number of athletes who have changed their allegiance for one reason or the other between 1998 and 2008 stands at a staggering 28,584 of whom are from Africa! Interestingly, none of the athletes from the rest of the continents changed their allegiance to Africa.

International Relocation – FIFA recognizes this as evident in the first exception under article 19 of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, which states that: “International transfers of players are only permitted if the player is over the age of 18.” subject to the following three exceptions:

1. The player’s parents had moved to the country in which the new club is located for reasons not linked to football as earlier stated.

2. The transfer takes place within the territory of the European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) as well as the player is aged between 16 and 18. In this case, the new club must fulfill the following minimum obligations:
3. The player stage no further than 50km from a national border and the club with which the player wishes to be registered in the neighboring association is also within 50km from that border. The maximum distance between the player's domicile and the club's headquarters shall be 100km. In such cases, the player must continue to live at home where the two associations concerned must give their explicit consent.

Naturalization – A small, though rapidly increasing aspect, in the international migration of sporting talent is where an athlete or player demands that he/she have changed his/her citizenship (naturalisation), which is the most visible and tricky part of muscle drain. When it comes to selecting for national success, picking naturalized players knows no borders. Podnar (2014) reported that, it still seems surprising that national teams view the guidelines for eligibility as flexible and include players that only can perhaps only be described as nationals in a very loose sense.

The issue of naturalization in sport is far from being a recent trend and indeed the practice has a long history. The pre-war German team absorbed the best Austrian players after Anschluss and also forced the Pole Ernst Wilimowski into its ranks during the occupation of Poland. In preparation for the 1934 World Cup, Italy naturalized several extraordinary "oriundi", South Americans of Italian stock. Thus Orsi, Monti, Demaria and Guaita played for the "azzurri" and won the world title against Czechoslovakia.

Political turmoil played the chief role in players' movements between borders during the fifties. Ferenc Puskas became a Spaniard after the bloody Soviet intervention in Hungary 1956, and Franco's Spain also gave passports to the Hungarian Ladislav Kubala, ethnically Slovakian, and the Argentinian national Alfredo Di Stefano who was of Italian descent. After Omar Sivori, another "oriundo" swapped his Argentina jersey for an Italy shirt during the sixties, FIFA banned transfers between national teams but allowed

immigrants and their children to play for their new country provided they obtained citizenship.

In any case, FIFA requires some kind of connection between the player and the country to accept naturalization for soccer purposes.

Some national teams have been far from reserved in welcoming foreign born players into their ranks. Belgium adopted and adored the Croatian Josip Weber in the first half of the nineties and, more recently, his fellow countryman Branko Strupar – both were naturalized specifically for inclusion in the national team. Over the last six years Austria has created a little Croatian legion of four, Ivica Vastic being the best of them, and indeed the top Austrian player for several years.

Germany has looked much further afield to fill the attacking void created by the retirements of Klinsmann, Bierhoff and Kirsten. The list includes the Bobic (Slovenia), Rink (Brazil), Dundee (South Africa), Neuville (French Swiss), Asamoah (Ghana), Kurany (Hungary/Brazil) and the Klose and Podolski (both Polish). The Poland national team has responded by including the Nigerian Emanuel Olisadebe. Sweden has included a number of players from South Eastern Europe, most prominently Zlatan Ibrahimovic. However, this is a true reflection of a change in the composition of the population brought about by the arrival of large numbers of immigrants from the former Yugoslavia.

It must also be remembered that, the option of including foreign-born players is far easier to take for countries that were once colonial powers. Since the early nineties, the Dutch have been calling on a number of talented players of Surinamese descent which is in stark contrast with the white-only policy that prevailed during the seventies. And can anyone imagine "Les Bleus" (France) being so successful without African players like Zidane (Algeria), Vieira (Senegal) or Desailly (Ghana), American reinforcements like Thuram and Henry (Guadelupe) or Oceanian imports like Karembeu (New Caledonia)? Not forgetting, of course, the Armenian, Portuguese and Argentinian contingent. In reality it was a World XI (or rather, a World XXII) that brought the 1998 World Cup and European Championships trophy home - to France.

The number of naturalized citizens in national squads that competed at Athens Olympics 2004 was not unnoticed. There were 29 naturalized athletes in the French national squad for the Athens Olympics in 2004. 22 of the athletes originated from developing countries and 6 from transition economies. Poli and Gillon (2006) provide a more comprehensive picture: they found 270 naturalized athletes at the Athens Olympics out of which 41 originated from Africa, 43 from Asia, 57 from America, and 120 from Europe. Those 270 athletes were respectively selected in national squads of European (187), American (35), Asian (25) and African (5) countries, and in Oceania's squads (17). The balance again shows a net outflow of naturalized athletes from developing countries and a net inflow in developed countries.

World Class Facilities and Improved Training Packages – Another reason for athletes migration is the existence of world class sport facilities and improved scientific training packages. This has been a major attraction to athletes from developing countries to developed nations. Nowadays, it is a common practice among national sport federations in the developing countries when preparing for major competitions to set up training camps and organize warm – up matches outside the shore of their countries, particularly in the developed countries. Excuses usually given for this trend are often premised on differentials noticed in facilities and training packages. Nigeria for instance when preparing for international competitions sometimes set training camps in Malaga and Spain. While international friendly matches are usually slated for either United States or London at the expense of the economy benefit to their fans and home countries.

Economic Reasons

Wage Differential: To contextualize the immigration of African footballers to Europe, one has to be aware of the particular circumstances surrounding the global game in most of Africa's countries. Clearly, they have few in common with their European counterparts. An example is that of Qatar's Aspire Academy which in 2007, according to Scherrens (2007,) screened 500 000 African 'boys' in seven countries. The average GDP per capita of these countries is

3.152 euro while the one of the wealthy Qatar is 21.559 euro. These figures obviously point to a considerable divergence in livelihood and wage gaps in view of the respective remuneration in Africa and Europe or even Qatar. As such, it is not difficult to understand why talented African football players want to ply their services in Europe or in one of the oil wealthy countries which recently discovered football as a means of profiling themselves on the international scene. African players are thus seeking nothing more than to maximize their economic return. The direct result is however large scale immigration flow towards more prosperous countries or a so called 'brawn or muscle drain'.

Sport Academy Business: The goals of sport projects can be very different from those of the players themselves. Sport Academies/Projects are usually aimed at making life better for young talented Africans in Africa. In Sport however, everybody wants to make his or her life better somewhere else.

Panneborg (2010) stated that, the so-called 'muscle drain' is enormous: thousands of African players leave the continent to find employment in Asia, the Middle East, the United States and Europe. Some researchers call the trade a form of 'exploitation' and 'neocolonialism' by the West. On the other hand, a family or village can definitely profit from a player's career.

The trade in African players is so great that there are thousands of football academies on the continent. Some will make the players to go and get an education to prepare them for a life outside of football. Most of the academies are illegal and are run by dubious characters who want to make quick money. A lot of their players are also transferred through 'the clubs'. Researchers argue that the trade is killing football in Africa. Indeed, local leagues have lost much of their popularity due to the exodus of players.

It is important to know that, the trade in African players is big business. Since there is a lot of money to be made, it is common to see many powerful individuals contracting or supervising young football talents. Hence, sport academies are thus operating in a context where money and power come together. In countries such as Ghana and South Africa (and even indeed, Nigeria), according to Panneborg (2010), it was discovered that, club officials and football

administrators conspire to sell as many players as possible. They all take their share of the profits.

The results are that, many young players find themselves at the mercy of unscrupulous agents. Researchers argue that, most African players end up in the lower leagues in Europe and elsewhere. Some of them were cheated and now live their lives in the streets of Europe's major cities. The situation is that, there are projects in Africa that inform young players about the dangers of HIV/AIDS. Whereas the same players do not know anything about signing contracts. Sport may be an important tool for development but there are many issues in the game itself that need attention.

Implication of Muscle Drain on Sport Development in the Developing Countries

The effects of muscle drain on economy and sport development in the developed countries are enormous; however, this article will make a generalization of some of these implications as follows:

Economic Underdevelopment: There are a number of effects of muscle drain on host countries. For players, when a transfer is successful, some major effects are higher wages and revenues consequently a better standard of living. When unsuccessful, the player is often left aside by the host club or resold on the labour market or simply abandoned in the case of teenagers. If a trial is unsuccessful, a player has to look to find another club, usually in a lower division, or find a way to come back home.

The developing countries and the nursery clubs are not usually adequately compensated for the educational and training costs they have incurred before their players were transferred. Absent or limited compensation deepens the gap between the sports economy of a developing home country and a developed host country and undermines the sporting substance of developing countries as well as their expectations and probability to win in international contests or at the Olympics. Developing countries of national squads are often weakened by European or American clubs' reluctance to release their Third World players, which erode the home country's capacity to field its most talented athletes in international contests. In addition, when players are released, the national squad of a home country is

less and less national in some sense, insofar as most of its players are professionals playing abroad.

Due to the lack of compensation for transferred players, professional clubs and leagues in developing countries remain poor and are unable to keep their best players or to get a reasonably high price (transfer fee) for them in the global market for talent. In all, home countries are the losers in the muscle drain business; the issue to be solved is how home countries could be compensated by the winners that are located in developed host countries. This issue is yet to be effectively resolved since the emergence of sports' globalization.

Undermining of Sport Development and Diversion of Talents: Firstly, muscle drain, undermines the sporting substance of developing countries. Secondly, it diverts the most talented sportsmen and women, those few who have had the opportunity from the rare domestic coaches and sport facilities. Thirdly, in some cases it erodes the capacity of the home country to use its most talented athletes for international competition; a fact that partly explains the poor performances of developing countries in World Sport events. For instance, football players from Africa (namely Cameroon, Nigeria, and Ivory Coast) were not released by their (European) professional clubs for selection to their domestic national teams to play in matches of the 22nd African Cup of Nations in the year 2000 (177 out of the 352 registered players were playing in European Clubs as at 2004). The African Cup is nicknamed "The Cattle-Fair" because a number of well-known European Clubs' managers, coaches and players' agents attend it with the objectives of recruiting talented players. At Sydney Olympics, Cameroon, Nigeria and Morocco had to compete without some of their star football players in spite of FIFA's rules that are supposed to compel clubs to release players selected for national teams. In addition, when such players were released, the national squad of a home country would be less and less national in some sense insofar as most of its players are professionals playing abroad. This has been an issue affecting the fortunes of such countries who rely on players playing abroad to prosecute major international competitions.

Such players in most cases are less committed to lead their home country team to success, as full allegiance is usually to their foreign

clubs. In most cases, they are less disciplined, especially when the coach is local, as they usually consider themselves richer or even more experienced than the coach.

Players like John Obi Mikel (Nigeria) nurtured in the local league was snapped to the English Premiership shortly after representing Nigeria at a FIFA world youth championship without any further contribution to the local league at home. Local boys like Dele Alampasu, Kelechi Iheanacho, Taiwo Awoniyi, Musa Yahaya and host of others who won 2013 under 17 FIFA world cup for Nigeria and 2014 CHAN runner up super stars like Ejike Uzoenyi, Kunle Odunlami and Rabi'u Ali who recently did Nigeria proud are also been lured to play abroad; thereby eroding the nation of its brightest talents.

Interruptions of Educational Attainment: Most migrant athletes and particularly the teenage talented players run the risk of failing to complete their elementary schooling and educational studies when crossing borders in search of fulfilling their sporting dreams. Although most of them had access to and were offered the chance of continuing their basic education, they generally preferred to abandon their studies thinking that, they were already close to sporting success. The problem is, when such dreams end abruptly in most cases due to injury, they thereafter have little or nothing to look forward to.

Illegal Migrant Status: Developing countries' Players on transfer deal with or fail to make it in sports and also happen not to have completed their basic education, are left with little choice but to stay in the streets and try to eke out a living. With expired passports or non-renewable residence cards, they do often end up as illegal immigrants.

Vulnerability and Adaptations Complications: When many of the developing countries players' on transfer deals are exposed to totally new environments, cultures and languages, it is quite obvious for these athletes to remain vulnerable due to their ignorance. Language barriers also play a part and they could easily fall prey to fraudsters or fall on the wrong side of the law without wishing to do so. This is

evident in many alleged trumped up cases of rape and tax evasion. This is especially the case when such athletes do not receive adequate advice on tax, social security issues and others. This may ultimately end up interfering with their performance and/or integration with the rest of the team, and may lead to their sporting career being terminated abruptly.

Trafficking and Smuggling: The phenomenon by which African football players are lured to Europe is often described as human trafficking or even as a form of modern slavery. This involves the exploitation of people through force, coercion, fraud and deception which is therefore considered as a modern day form of slavery. Notwithstanding, the necessary penalising legislation, more will be necessary to counter this evolution which will continue to gain ground alongside the growing income and development gap between the North and the South. The immigration of football players finds its place within this evolution which is extensively illustrated through many existing cases. Ironically, human trafficking seems to be a legitimate elementary component of the football players' labour market if, at least, one considers the payment of financial sums to take on persons and employ them as an essential element of trafficking. Although legitimate, this is a triggering factor, facilitating profit making with players, especially the ones who are cheap and easy to recruit.

In an undercover documentary of the BBC, a dark light is shed on the profession of managers and players' agents. The film clearly shows how the world of football is fraught with money laundering and how team managers do not hesitate to circumvent rules and legislation that might impede their prospect on personal financial gain. Mogi Bayat, team manager of the Belgian side Charleroi, contends in the reportage that, Belgium is an ideal platform to stall players before selling them to one of Europe's major leagues. In his exact words, he could fly 150 Africans to Belgium and let them go through test for several days before selecting the five best and send others back home.

The glut of African players is also illustrated by the African Cup, which is nicknamed the 'cattle fair', and even more so by the junior edition where European club managers, players' agents and coaches

are always present. As was asserted above, the proliferation of these tournaments is sometimes considered as one of the main causes of the increased outflow of African players. African teams which are integrally invited to play in Europe or which play official international tournaments are also to be framed within this line of thinking. Samuel Yaw Agyeukn was 19 when he went with the national youth team of Ghana to Denmark in 2004. After having lost in the quarter final against Sweden, the team manager took him to Italy where he did not manage to find a club. A Ghanaian acquaintance who heard of him and who acts as an unofficial manager in Austria then managed to let him come to the country where he played in the low division club Seiersberg.

In March 2007, the Mali authorities alerted IOM of the presence of a large group of 34 young boys in a villa in Sikasso. The boys turned out to be members of an amateur football club from Abidjan in Ivory Coast. They had been promised contracts with European football clubs and had therefore agreed to travel with the club president and a manager to Europe via Mali. The parents of the boys had each paid about 450 euro to the player agent for the journey. Once in Sikasso, they joined a smaller group of boys already held in the villa. Eleven (11) of them escaped and alerted the Malian authorities, which arrested the manager and the president, and requested IOM's assistance for the voluntary return and reintegration of the boys home. The press briefing of IOM concerning this story further revealed that, the boys were smuggled into Mali in late December and experienced rough living conditions. They were all aged between 16 and 18 years and coming from Yopougon, a municipality in the outskirts of Abidjan.

Dwindling Economic Prowess and Popularity of Home Teams: The high exodus of talented players from developing countries, particularly Africa, to the more profitable leagues in Europe and other developed countries of the world have great impact on the economic fortune and popularity of the home teams. In Africa, teams in UEFA Leagues, particularly the premierships, are more popular even in Africa than African teams. While clubs in the developed world enjoy followership of their fan all over the world, many African

professional clubs playing in the local leagues cannot boast of fans in even the villages or cities next to where they are located.

This trend no doubt has great impact on the economic fortunes of these local clubs. Players nourished and nurtured to stardom in the local leagues of the developing nations are sold cheaply to big clubs in the developed countries who, later after a while, resold them during the transfer window to another big club for an unbelievable amount. These are some of the reasons while many of these big clubs; like Arsenal, Chelsea, Manchester United, Liverpool, Barcelona FC, Real Madrid, Leon, Valencia, AC Milan, Paris St German and many others have gone from just being a sport club but huge business entities diversifying into other business enterprises; like Television, real estate, superstores, restaurants, hotels newsmagazines, merchandising, retailshop, lotteries/gaming/gambling and of course sport academies. Some of these clubs are even quoted in the stock market and all these are done to expand their financial base and dominance over others.

Low Income and Patronage in the Sport Tourism Sector: According to STIC (2008) since 1960, important trends have been observed in the areas of sport and tourism. These were recently developed and formed profitable industries in the world economic forum. The term "sport tourism" was first mentioned in the late 1960s or early 1970s to describe the special form of tourism which was combined with sport activities. Some authors define sport tourism as all forms of active or passive involvement in sport activities, be it for professional purposes or for the sake of amateurism. Prerequisite is, however, traveling away from the place of permanent living. It is probably self-evident that, sport tourism is a complex and wide area of endeavour. Sport tourism development demands for high quality infrastructure in terms of physical environment, services, transportation, housing, entertainment, facilities, and organizations. This area has become difficult to develop particularly by the African countries, due it to the fact that, they are not usually a major contender in hosting major sporting events. In the history of FIFA World Cup, only South Africa has ever hosted the event in the African Continent. From the inception of Modern Olympics, no African country has ever hosted it

hence, why many of these countries find it difficult to develop their Sport Tourism potential.

Tourism and travelling are expected to grow by five percent each year up to 2020; the forecast for sports tourism is ten percent per year. Cities and regions across the globe are presently entered into honourable combat for these tourists; their money, and the inherent growth potential that follow in their wake. The winners will be those cities/regions that can fathom the fundamental motive power of sports' tourism, and most successfully can utilize the potential of sports as tourist attraction (Weed, 2006).

One source of income to the Commercial Sport sector is that from sports tourism, namely; spending by people who are not resident in the region, coming to the region for sport-related reasons. Some will be 'long-stay' visitors from elsewhere while others will be day visitors attending a particular event. It is estimated that, in UK each year, there are some 1.1m overseas tourists and 2.2m long-stay domestic tourists whose purpose for visiting a region is sport-related. Associated with them is spending of £37m on admissions to sporting events, or participating. In addition, they are also responsible for a further £154m being spent on accommodation. At the same time, £114m is spent on admissions by UK residents in regions other than where they live (SportEngland, 2003).

Conclusion

It is important to state clearly that, though this paper emphasis to more of the negativity and imbalance in muscle trade between developed and developing countries, there are however benefits of muscle trade. What could be more important is for the developing countries to develop models capable of balancing the imbalances in this form of trade. It is highly imperative to look into how sports are being managed, sponsored, and marketed in the developing countries. The differential in the numbers of talented players jetting out of developing countries to developed world is enormous when one considers the trickles of athletes migrating from developed countries to developing countries.

Recommendations

To check the high flow or migration of athletes from developing world, particularly Africa, to developed countries, there is the need for development of 'Muscle Retaining and Attraction Strategy' to experience balance of Trade in the Muscle market. To this end, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Domestication of International Federations Laws:** there is need for Africa and other developing countries to domesticate international federations' laws on 'Muscle Trade'. FIFA, IOC and other federations have established many laws on this issue but many of these laws may not work totally in the interest of these countries unless they are domesticated to suit the local needs without breaking any of the international laws.
2. **Running National and Professional Sports as Business:** One of the major factor working against African countries is that, all sport are still been run as 'past-time' thing and not as business venture. In most of the African countries, sport management and financing (including clubs and associations affairs) are largely controlled by the government. This explains the reason why funding of sport development and other activities are still grossly inadequate. Sport today has become a huge business and Africa cannot afford to be left behind. This is a major reason for the exodus of athletes from this continent to developed countries has been on the Increase. Talented athletes will always want to migrate to where their potential can be fully developed in terms of quality training and high performance in world standard competitions. But above all where their potential can be well appreciated financially. Clubs and federations should learn to invest and diversify into other business enterprises that could expand their financial base. They can also sell shares or seek to be quoted on the stock market.
3. **Attractions of Reasonable and Specific Sponsorship:** the usual practice in Africa is that, when government or any other organization sponsors, either a sports club or sport competition it is usually a lump sum sponsorship. It will be more beneficial if sponsors could be encouraged to be specific on the aspect being sponsored so that, more sponsorship fund could be attracted. For

instance, a sport organization could seek sponsorship on the payment of sign-up fees and allowances of their coaches and players as well as in return, the sponsor gets the endorsement right of which every player or coach has or her bill picked by them. This kind of sponsorship can be used to attract some of the big players and coaches in the European leagues to ply their trade in Africa. Some of these players and coaches, particularly those of African descent may sign for a local league if they could be paid the same amount they could get abroad. Other areas of sponsorship can be in the areas of food and drinks, facilities, accommodation, transportation, competitions, broadcasting and public relations, clothing, security, and medical. If a sport club could attract sponsors for nearly all these areas, such club will be able to garner enough financial power to prosecute their activities. It is not always easy to get a sponsor that will be able to finance all the needs of a sport organization, not even the government.

4. ***Development of the Country Sport Tourism Potential:*** - South Africa being the first and only African country ever to host FIFA world Cup is now the sport tourists destination gaining millions of dollars before and after hosting the FIFA World cup. Other African countries also need to look into this direction which in turns will have positive effect on the nations' sport economy. Many developing countries are found of setting up training camps in developed countries when preparing for major events. This habit is a contributory factor to muscle drain as it makes it easier for the scout and agents to meet and convince players under grooming to transfer to the more profitable leagues in the developed world. In the past, there have been reported cases of athletes eloping from such camp into Europe and America. This practice also contributes to trade imbalance as developing countries spent their scarce resources in securing such training camps without actually attracting foreign sport organizations to do same in their country. To this end, developing Nations should also consider having world standard training camps good enough to attract sport tourists and events.
5. ***Upgrading of Sport Facilities:*** Developing countries also need to upgrade their sport facilities to the standard obtainable in other

parts of the world. This will improve their chances of hosting world sport events, attraction of world class players and teams looking for a place to camp their players in preparation for a major event. It will also help in keeping talented athletes at home and as well contribute to the development of sport tourism.

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