

**An overview of sport programmes and sport facilities
available to youth in Philippolis, South Africa.**

Are children being left to play in the dust?

by

Graham Williams

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Supervisor: Prof. Doreen Atkinson

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DECLARATION

I declare that this mini-dissertation, submitted for the Master's degree in Development Studies at the University of the Free State, is my own, independent work and has not been submitted by me to any other university/faculty. I furthermore cede the copyright in respect of this mini-dissertation in favour of the University of the Free State.

Graham Williams

Johannesburg

Abstract

Sport programmes are increasingly incorporated into youth development initiatives. These programmes are thought to “add value” to social development projects. A recent study highlighted the importance of appropriate sport facilities for the success of sport programmes in youth development. The South African government introduced laws and policies to promote sport participation amongst young South Africans. The National Youth policy placed particular emphasis on the advancement of sport programmes for young people living in rural areas in South Africa. We investigated the availability of sport programmes and sport facilities for the youth of Philippolis. Philippolis is a rural town in the southern Free State. We also considered the current social benefits and the potential benefits of sport activities and sport programmes for young people of this community. This was a case study. We identified and interviewed key members of the community as well as influential people involved with, and responsible for, sport programmes and sporting activities, youth development as well as sport infrastructures in this town. We found sport facilities to be limited and poorly maintained. We think this negatively impacts on current sport programmes and the potential benefits of such programmes on the social development of young people in Philippolis.

Introduction

Determining the state of sport and recreation in Philippolis – aim, objectives and finding

In the past decade the South African government announced a number of policies and acts which aim at promoting sport initiatives amongst young South Africans (Government Gazette, 1998). The National Sports and Recreation Act (110) of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998), the South African Sport Commission Act (109) of 1998 (Republic of South Africa 1998) and the National Youth Policy (Government Gazette 1997, 47-50) all advocate the social upliftment of young South Africans from previously disadvantaged, rural communities through sport development programmes.

The aim of this study was to ascertain whether young people from such communities are gaining any social benefits from the new legislation. We chose to investigate the impact of sport development programmes on the lives of young people living in Philippolis. Philippolis is a rural town in an arid area known as the Karoo. The town falls within the borders of South Africa's Free State province and the community of Philippolis mostly consists of previously disenfranchised South Africans, living in poor conditions. Young people living in this Karoo-town therefore represent the population which the new legislation intends to uplift and benefit.

For our study we wanted to establish whether sport activities and sport programmes currently contribute to the well-being and social development of youngsters living in

Philippolis. To do this we investigated the condition and availability of sport and recreation facilities in this town, and the impact of these on sport programmes currently on offer to youngsters of this community. Our aim was to identify a relationship between the condition of sport and recreation facilities, and the availability of sport programmes directed at youth. The objectives for the study were, firstly, to determine the state of sport facilities and to identify sport programmes in which young community members partake. Secondly, we set out to identify potential community sporting initiatives. Lastly, we assessed the social benefits as well as the potential benefits of sport programmes for the youth of Philippolis.

We found municipal sport and recreation facilities to be limited and poorly maintained. However, young people still supported community clubs well, particularly for soccer and netball. The poor condition and limited number of soccer fields and netball courts negatively impacted on the quality of practice sessions and matches. Also, the amount of youngsters, wanting to participate, outnumbered the amount of people that could be accommodated. We found that schools offered little variety in sports activities to scholars. This was due to a limited number of sport facilities. Furthermore, poorly maintained sport infrastructures, at the various schools, affected the quality of sport activities on offer to scholars.

The current condition of sport and recreation infrastructures in Philippolis negatively impacts on sport programmes offered to youth. Although the new Sports and Recreation Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998), the new Sport Commission Act (Republic of South

Africa, 1998) and the National Youth Policy (Government Gazette 1997, 47-50) all prioritise the social upliftment of young South Africans in rural areas, the community of Philippolis does not seem to benefit from it.

Sport development initiatives have the potential to make significant positive contributions to the social development of youth. Many young people from this town currently miss out on these because there is a lack of well maintained sport facilities in this town.

The value of sport in youth development

Well designed and properly implemented sport programmes have the potential to contribute to the social development of young people (Peptipas, et al. 2005, 76; UN 2003a, 2; UN 2005, 2; European Commission 2005, 10-12). Researchers have shown the benefits of sport in development projects in matters as diverse as health education, community building, peace campaigns, poverty reduction and gender equity initiatives (Berna 2004, 1-2; UNICEF 2004, 19; Fasting 2005, 665; Meier 2005, 10; Taylor 1996, 339-350; Cogan and Baggaley 2006, 3; Weinberg and Gould 2007, 552-557). Furthermore, it is thought that sport programmes have an important role in the drive for HIV/AIDS awareness and the alleviation of social problems such as child prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse amongst youth as well as juvenile delinquency (Brady 1998, 80; Fraser-Thomas et al. 2005, 24; Seippel 2006, 51; Smith & Waddington, Yin et al. 1999, 170-185; Berns 2007, 342-348).

In the past decade the value of sport programmes as part of youth development initiatives were emphasized with campaigns such as the United Nations' (UN) International Year of Sport and Physical Education in 2005 (UN 2005) and the European Year of Education through Sport in 2004 (European Commission 2005). These initiatives focused on “sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace” (UN 2005). It is thought that children can be taught important social values through participation in sport activities. These values, such as fair play, cooperation, sharing and respect, underlie constructive participation within communities (Lea-Howarth 2006, 7). Researchers have shown sport to be an effective tool for rebuilding socially fragmented societies plagued by crime and violence (UNICEF 2003, 15). Participants of organized sport are less likely to engage in delinquent behaviour (Weinberg and Gould 2007, 558). Sports and recreation programmes became popular tools for crime prevention in the United States in the 1990's. For example, midnight basketball was introduced as a constructive activity between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. for young men. Longitudinal studies “make a case that something significant with respect to crime prevention is associated with the implementation of midnight basketball programmes” (Hartmann and Depro, 180-196).

Another area where sporting activities are thought to make a positive contribution is education (Sport and the Commission for Africa 2004, 6). For instance, the Youth Education through Sport (YES) project reached 25 000 young Zimbabweans since its introduction to this country in 2000. This project uses sport activities to teach children life and leadership skills (UNICEF 2003, 8-10). Sport programmes were shown to

increase school attendance amongst young and adolescent girls (Berna 2004, 1-2; UNICEF 2003, 8-10; Berns 2007, 348). In an effort to promote gender equity, sport programmes were introduced in developing countries. These programmes created opportunities for girls to build self-esteem, to create a positive self-image and to master new skills (Meier 2005, 9-10; Brady 1998, 80).

In 2003 the UN's inter agency task force on Sport for Development and Peace suggested sport programmes to be used in HIV/AIDS prevention programmes. This task force identified young women to be most at risk for contracting HIV and suggested sport to be incorporated in HIV prevention programmes aimed at women because "girls are highly responsive to targeted sport initiatives" (Cogan and Baggaley 2006, 3). Physical activity has been shown to limit juvenile obesity and prevent non-communicable diseases (cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and hypertension) in later life (UNICEF 2003, 6; Weinberg & Gould, 398-403).

A recent study highlighted the importance of appropriate sport facilities for the success of sport programmes as part of social development projects. The social impact of sport programmes seems to be related to the accessibility of appropriate facilities (Burnett and Hollander 2006, 15; Caborn and Thomas 2006, 3-14; Coalter 2007, 6).

South African perspective on sport in youth development

The benefits of sport programmes and the need for appropriate sport facilities are recognised by the South African government. Specific policies and laws have been introduced to promote sport and recreation amongst South Africans. Particular emphasis is placed on the provision of sport and recreation in “neglected, rural areas” in the National Sports and Recreation Act (110) of 1998. Since the introduction of this Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998), local governments have been charged with the responsibility of maintaining sport and recreation facilities. The South African Sport Commission Act (109) of 1998 charges the South African Sports Commission with the “provision and upgrading of facilities and community centres with relevant local authorities”. This commission is also responsible for the distribution of funds to local authorities for the upgrading and maintaining of such facilities (Republic of South Africa 1998). Furthermore, the National Youth Policy (Government Gazette 1997, 47-50) emphasizes the role of sport in the development of communities and highlights the need of sport programmes for youth living in rural areas.

Focus on Philippolis

We investigated the availability of sport programmes and sport facilities for young people living in Philippolis. Philippolis is a rural community in the southern Free State with a population of 7528 people in 2004 (Global Insight 2004). (The racial distribution is 51%

black, 34% coloured and 15% white.) Eighty-five percent of this community was previously disadvantaged in terms of the pre-1994 South African government.

The majority of black people in this community reside in a township adjacent to Philippolis, namely Poding-tse-Rolo, and the coloured people live in the township of Bergmanshoogte. Twenty-five percent of the population is younger than 30 years. Approximately 40% of the population is economically active, mostly in the agricultural sector (26%) and the community service sector (15%) (National Research Foundation 2007; Van Schalkwyk 2002, 1). Local governance of Philippolis is managed by the Kopanong Municipality.

Method

We employed a qualitative research approach which was based on face to face, in depth interviewing. The study was conducted over a period of 13 months. Important community members and influential people – with regard to sport programmes and sport facilities which affect youth in Philippolis – were identified and interviewed. These included three headmasters, three school sport coordinators, six community sport coaches, a dancing teacher and a minister of religion. (Of the eight community soccer clubs and four community netball clubs currently active in Philippolis, we chose to interview coaches from five of the soccer clubs and a netball coach from one netball club.) These respondents were all residents of Philippolis and they had all been involved with youth development projects and sport activities in this community for periods that varied

between three months and eighteen years. Also, the Unit Manager of Philippolis, the Community Services manager and the Youth Development Officer from the Kopanong Municipality, were interviewed.

During interviews each respondent answered to questions set out on a standard questionnaire. The questions covered aspects such as the number of facilities owned by an institution and the condition thereof, the number and type of sports programmes offered by an institution, the social dynamics involved in sport programmes/activities. Their opinion regarding the social issues facing youth, and how they think sport could be linked to broader development initiatives/goals, were noted.

We visited sport infrastructures owned by both schools and the municipality of Philippolis to determine the condition of these.

Results

Sport programmes

Table 1 and 2 lists the different sport activities presented by community clubs and the three schools in Philippolis, respectively. Sport activities in Philippolis centre round soccer and netball. Approximately 700 young men, boys and girls play soccer and 250 young women and girls play netball. All three schools offer soccer and netball for scholars. Currently eight community clubs organize soccer practices for players between the ages of 12 and 31 and four clubs offer netball practices and organized matches. All

community clubs have regular practice sessions (at least twice a week) and actively partake in weekly or bimonthly matches. According to all coaches there is a dire need for equipment: netball- and soccer balls are rotated between different teams of each club (K. Pule, pers. comm.; C. Dewee, pers. comm.; P. Nkululeko, pers. comm.; L. Rouls, pers. comm.; K. Qoma, pers. comm.; J. Rouls, pers. comm.). Mini-cricket and athletics are offered to a limited extent for scholars at Bergmanshoogte Intermediate School. Limited volleyball and cricket are offered for scholars at Philippolis Primary School. Line dancing is a new recreational activity, introduced by a resident of Philippolis. This recreational activity is gaining popularity amongst youth.

A private company, which coordinates educational holiday programmes for children between 8 and 12 years, has introduced sporting activities to youngsters of Philippolis over the past five years. Sporting activities as part of their educational programme centre round soccer, netball, cricket, and touch rugby.

Other sport initiatives include three, one day sport events, open to all community members. These were hosted by the Philippolis Action Committee (A. Muller, pers. comm.; R. Engelbrecht, pers. comm.), Love Life (Love-Life Games) (I. Mahloko, pers. comm.), and the Kopanong Municipality (O.R. Tambo Games) (L. Rigala, pers. comm.).

School teachers responsible for school sport all attended coaching courses presented by the Department of Education. Only one soccer coach and one netball coach, from the community clubs interviewed, attended one sport skills course each.

Problems facing youth in Philippolis

Perceptions of social problems amongst youth in Philippolis: Of the 16 respondents interviewed, 14 indicated alcohol abuse and 10 indicated drug abuse to be problematic. Respondents mentioned the following social problems to affect the welfare of youth in Philippolis: HIV/AIDS (7), prostitution (2), child-headed families (2) and teenage pregnancies (8). “Teenage girls use their bodies to [earn] money and once they fall pregnant they apply for a government grant. This is sometimes the only money [on which] a family survives” (K. Groch, pers. comm.). Respondents stated that some young people of this community are involved in crime (8) and violence (3). All respondents were of the opinion that if youth would to participate in sporting activities, at least some of the social problems would be alleviated. Four coaches from the community clubs indicated that practice sessions are used as an opportunity to discuss social problems such as HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, crime as well as alcohol and drug abuse with young athletes. For example, a coach said “I am a soccer coach but also a HIV/AIDS counsellor in the Itemoheng HIV/AIDS support group. [I] use soccer practices to educate youth [about the disease]” (K. Qoma, pers. comm.).

Sport infrastructure

Sport facilities in Philippolis are either owned by the Kopanong Municipality or by one of the three schools in the community, namely Bergmanshoogte Intermediate School, Philippolis Primary School, and Philippolis High School.

Table 3 lists the sport facilities available to scholars at the different schools as well as the current condition of these facilities. None of the schools receive external funding for the maintenance and improvement of these. Bergmanshoogte Intermediate School is categorized as a section 21 school according to the South African Schools Act of 1996. The governing body of this school is responsible for allocating monies towards the maintenance and enhancement of facilities. Both Philippolis Primary School and Philippolis High School are categorized as section 20 schools. Headmasters of these schools requisite funds from the Provincial Department of Education for repairs and upgrading of school owned sport facilities.

Table 4 lists the sport facilities in Philippolis owned by the Kopanong Municipality as well as the current condition of these facilities. The budget of the Kopanong Integrated Development Plan did not make provision for funding for maintenance or improvement of any municipality owned sport facilities during 2006 (Kopanong IDP 2003 – 2006, 56) or 2007 (L. Vorster, pers. comm.).

We considered the available sport facilities for the two main sporting activities on offer in Philippolis, namely soccer and netball, and continue to discuss them separately:

Soccer: Currently the Poding-tse-Rolo stadium houses the only true soccer field in Philippolis. (Poding-tse-Rolo is a black township adjacent to Philippolis as discussed earlier.) Other soccer fields listed in either table 3 or 4 are unmarked open areas on which young athletes play. In 2005 Philippolis received R100 000 from Kopanong Municipality

for the improvement of the Poding-tse-Rolo stadium. This was a grant from the National Lottery Fund. The monies were used to better ablution amenities and to build a security wall around the soccer field (L. Vorster, pers. comm.). Coaches from the three soccer clubs, using the Poding-tse-Rolo stadium for practices and soccer matches, all reported the ablution amenities to currently be in such a state of disrepair that it is unusable. Furthermore, the coaches all reported the Poding-tse-Rolo soccer field to be in poor condition. The field is uneven, it has no grass and is covered with small stones.

Open fields utilized for soccer practices include an area just east of Bergmanshoogte Intermediate School (R. Engelbrecht, pers. comm.) and a small plot of land outside the township of Poding-tse-Rolo. The former was previously used as a rubbish dump site (R. Engelbrecht, pers. comm.). The site was cleared in 2002 by the Kopanong Municipality and materials for goal posts were sponsored by a private donor. Neither of the fields is even, nor do they have grass. Coaches using these areas for soccer practices reported the areas to be covered with small stones and broken glass. The coach, using the plot near Poding-tse-Rolo for soccer practices, uses big stones to demarcate goal posts. He raised concerns over injuries due to the poor conditions of the field and requested assistance from the municipality for clearing and levelling the ground three months ago. “The scars on my legs and arms are from being tackled on the soccer field where there is no grass” (C. Dewee, pers. comm.).

None of the schools have true soccer fields (see table 3). Bergmanshoogte Intermediate School utilizes an open field inside the school grounds for soccer and rugby practices.

The headmaster reported a need for funding of surface grass. Although the school does not have the finances to plant or maintain a green field, it has the man power to plant and water such a field.

Netball: The municipality owns one netball court, which is situated in Poding-tse-Rolo. Bergmanshoogte Intermediate School owns three cement surface netball courts. One of these courts is mostly used as a parking area. The remaining two courts are extensively utilized by scholars, a private development initiative as well as a community sports club for both netball and mini-cricket practices and matches (L. Rouls, pers. comm.).

Other sport facilities listed in tables 3 and 4, such as the swimming pools, athletics field, golf course, volley ball court and bowling green, are in such a state of dilapidation that it is not used for sporting activities.

Responsibilities towards sport and recreation for youth in Philippolis

All key respondents living in Philippolis reported a serious lack of monies for the upkeep of current sport infrastructures and a real need for more and better sport and recreation facilities. According to the Sport Coordinator at Philippolis Primary School; “a lack of sport facilities hinders participation in sport at the school” (Z. E. Mathiso pers. comm.). The headmasters of both Philippolis High School and Philippolis Primary School expressed a need for more involvement from the Department of Education in the maintenance of sport infrastructure at their respective schools. It was suggested that the

Department of Education make monies available for schools to invest in infrastructure at own discretion (K. P. Dyantyi, pers. comm.).

Until last year Bergmanshoogte Intermediate School had a financial partner in Investec Private Bank. Donations from Investec mainly focused on educational tools rather than sport facilities and equipment. Investec recently entered into a partnership with Philippolis High School (V. S. P. Magwa, pers. comm.). The headmaster of Philippolis High School foresees this partnership to result in the revamping of an old swimming pool at the school. The sport coordinators of all three schools expressed a need for more and better facilities to accommodate youngsters interested in participating in sport activities.

The Unit Manager in Philippolis from the Kopanong Municipality, said the municipality is solely responsible for the maintenance of public sport and recreation facilities in Philippolis (L. Vorster, pers. comm.).

A new Community Services Manager was appointed three months ago. She stated to be totally unfamiliar with Philippolis, the youth of this community and the needs regarding sport facilities in this town. She is responsible for nine towns (including Philippolis) serviced by the Kopanong Municipality and expressed the hope to acquaint herself with the needs regarding sport facilities in all nine communities in the coming months.

Table 1: Table of sport activities offered by community sport clubs.

Sport	Facility utilized	Teams	Age groups	Number of players	Number of practice sessions per week	Number of games per month	Equipment
<i>Liverpool Soccer Club</i>							
Soccer	Field next to Bergmanshoogte School	1 st 2 nd	Males 15-17 Males 9 - 14	16 14	3 3	4 (Sundays) 8	1 kit & 1 ball
<i>Callis Internal Sprinters Soccer Club</i>							
Soccer	Soccer stadium in Poding-tse-rolo	1 st	Males 17-32	20	4	4	1 kit & 1 ball
<i>Dynamos Soccer Club</i>							
Soccer	Soccer stadium in Poding-tse-rolo	1 st 2 nd 3 rd	Males 16-25 Boys 12-15 Boys < 11	18 16 24	3 2 Erratic	4 3 Erratic	1 kit & 2 balls
<i>Fast Eleven Soccer Club</i>							
Soccer	Soccer stadium in Poding-tse-rolo	1	Males 16-18	20	3	4	1 old ball and 1 kit
<i>Tigers Soccer Club</i>							
Soccer	Field outside of Poding-tse-rolo	1 st 2 nd	Males 18-31 Boys 9-17	19 23	4	4	1 kit, 2 balls (1 old the other new)
<i>Liverpool Netball Club</i>							
Netbal	Netball courts at Bergmanshoogte School	1 st 2 nd 3 rd	Girls 15-17 Girls 12-14 Women > 18	8 8 10	4 4 4	8 per year 8 per year 8 per year	4 balls Netball Kit

Table 2: Table of sport activities offered to scholars at the three schools in Philippolis

Sport	Facility utilized	Age Groups	No. of players	Number of practice sessions and matches	Equipment
<i>Bergmans-hoogte</i>					
Rugby	Field next to school	Boys 11-13	± 30	Training: twice per week. Matches: 5 per year.	Rugby balls In need of posts
Netball	3 Netball courts at school	Girls 6-15	±140	Training: twice per week. Matches: 4 per term for 10-15 yr olds.	Goal posts (needs fixing) Balls (in bad condition)
Soccer	Soccer field next to and in school	Boys 9-15	±140	Training: twice per week. Matches: 4 per term	Balls (in bad condition)
Cricket	School net-ball courts	Both 7-10	± 32	Training: once a week Matches: 2 per term	Balls, bats & wickets
Track & Field	Field next to school	Both 6-15	±140	Training: twice per week in 1st and 4th term	1 Discus, 1 Shot put (incorrect weight)
<i>Philippolis High School</i>					
Soccer	Stadium: PodingtseR	Boys >14 Girls >14	± 60 ± 60	Training: once per week Matches: once monthly	Balls, but no kit
Netball	Stadium: PodingtseR	Girls >14	± 50	Training: once per week Matches: once monthly	Balls & kit
<i>Philippolis Primary</i>					
Soccer	Stadium: PodingtseR	Pupils	± 120	Training: once per week Matches: once monthly	2 Balls 2 Sets of kit
Volley.	Area in school	Pupils	± 24	Training: once per week Matches: none	2 Balls 1 Volleyball net
Netball	Area in school	Pupils	± 28	Training: once per week Matches: once monthly	2 Balls 2 Sets of kit

Table 3: Table of sport facilities owned by different schools in Philippolis.

Facility	Amount	Condition
Bergmanshoogte Intermediate School		
Swimming pool (25meters)	1	Unusable
Round swimming pool	1	Unusable
Tennis courts	3	Unusable
Netball courts	1	Unusable
Field used for athletics	1	Unusable
Field used for soccer/rugby	1	Unusable
Philippolis High School		
Netball courts	1	Poor
Volleyball courts	1	Poor
Cricket grounds	1	Poor
Philippolis Primary School		
Netball courts	3	Fair
Field used for soccer/rugby	1	Poor

Table 4: Table of municipality owned sport and recreation facilities

Facility	Number	Condition
Public sport facilities - Philippolis		
18 hole Golf course	1	Unusable
Bowling Greens	1	Unusable
Tennis courts in Philippolis	4	Fair
Tennis courts in Poding- tse-rolo	4	Unusable
Soccer stadium with soccer field in Poding-tse-rolo	1	Poor but useable
Netball court in Poding-tse-rolo	1	Poor but useable
Recreation hall	1	Unusable and dangerous
Field for soccer in Bergmanshoogte	1	Poor

Discussion

Sport programmes are increasingly incorporated in international youth development projects. Sport activities are used to attract youth to these projects. Moreover, sport programmes are used to teach children and young adults important life and social skills (European Commission 2005, 10-11). A recent study showed that inadequate sport facilities negatively impacts on youth development projects which include sport programmes. For instance, poor facilities limit the number of young participants (Burnett and Hollander 2006, 15).

We chose to investigate the current sport programmes and facilities in Philippolis because it is a rural town and because a large portion of this community was previously disadvantaged. The National Sport and Recreation Act (110), the South African Sports Commission Act (109) and the National Youth Policy (Government Gazette 1997) all make provision for the development of sport initiatives amongst youth in previously disadvantaged, rural areas (Republic of South Africa, 1998). We wanted to see whether sport activities and sport programmes contribute to the well-being of youth living in Philippolis. We set out to assess whether sport was integrated in youth development projects that address potential social problems.

We found that sport facilities are poorly maintained and this negatively impacts on sport programmes and the potential benefits of such programmes on the social development of young people living in Philippolis. Accessible sport facilities in Philippolis dictate which

sport activities and programmes are available to youth. The lack of sport infrastructures also limits the number of young people that can participate in sports. There seems to be a problem of capital grants being spent on the establishment or improvement of facilities - such as the R100 000 lottery grant to improve the Poding-tse-Rolo Soccer stadium - but thereafter there is no system of maintenance.

We found mainly soccer and netball to be available to youth in this community. Currently eight community soccer clubs and four community netball clubs share one soccer stadium and four netball courts. The interest in these sports – especially soccer – is so overwhelming that open land areas are utilized for practice sessions. These areas are uneven, covered with stones and, in some instances, broken glass. School sport activities at all three schools in Philippolis also centre round soccer and netball. None of the schools have proper soccer fields and only Bergmanshoogte Intermediate School owns useable netball courts. Of the approximate 1130 high school and primary school children only 60 are exposed to other activities, namely line dancing, mini-cricket and volleyball. Thus far, only one private company has initiated a social development project with sport in Philippolis. This project, from Future Nature, has, for the past five years, invited children from the community to participate in educational activities during holidays (K. Groch, pers. comm.). According to the director of Future Nature, sport activities are used to draw children to participate in the educational programmes. Again, mainly soccer and netball are offered. Groch did however state that the sports “are a very happy part of the children’s day.” “We use sport to model good behaviour and to attract the children. Once

they are involved we get them involved in our education programme” (K. Groch, pers. comm.).

Respondents interviewed reported alcohol and drug abuse, crime, teenage pregnancies, and to a limited extent prostitution, child headed families and violence to be problems amongst young people in Philippolis. Most respondents indicated that sport programmes could address these social problems. Such programmes would contribute to positive socialization of children into the community of Philippolis. For instance, the headmaster of Philippolis Primary School felt that role models are needed for leadership development amongst youth. “Local soccer players are popular amongst youth, and can have a good influence [on them]. We can develop sport – but it is the people that need to be developed through sport.” (K. P. Dyantyi, pers. comm.). The sport coordinator of Bergmanshoogte Intermediate School thought sport could change attitudes of the community and could shift the focus away from poverty. “The discipline, perseverance, resilience and life skills, taught through sport, can improve children’s future employability.” (A. Muller, pers. comm.) The headmaster of Philippolis High School stated that sport needs objectives to deal with specific social issues. “[Sport] needs to be marketed properly amongst youth and members in the community - to draw youth to sport programmes and to get the community involved. We need to move away from playing sport for the sake of playing. We need to play it with a vision.” (V. S. P. Magwa, pers. comm.)

The way forward

Our study shows that the lack of sport infrastructures in Philippolis greatly impact on the value of sport programmes offered as part of youth development initiatives. Few researchers have investigated the relationship between sport infrastructures and the success of such projects. Studies showing the social benefit of sport programmes rarely mention the availability or condition of sport facilities. Such facilities are often taken for granted.

Soccer and netball are very popular amongst children and young adults in Philippolis. Despite the state of disrepair of most of the sport facilities, a substantial number of youngsters actively partake in scheduled practices and organised matches. There is evidently a need amongst young people to participate in sport or to use sporting activities as a means to socialize. We therefore think that sport programmes could be employed successfully in social upliftment and development projects in this community. We do not think the lack of adequate sport infrastructures is unique to Philippolis. It is likely that many other rural towns in South Africa experience similar problems.

It is possible that well directed sport programmes would bring about positive change. However, proper, safe and well maintained sport facilities are needed before such projects can be implemented effectively. Currently funding of sport infrastructures is needed. Legislation did not result in the rural community of Philippolis gaining improved or more sport facilities. We propose that government agencies consider partnerships with

private organizations for financial aid to upgrade and maintain the current facilities and for the development of new ones.

We suggest that novel sports, such as beach volleyball and beach soccer are introduced to youth, which would require little funding to lay-out and keep-up. Also, synthetic grass surfaces, which require no watering and limited maintenance, should be considered for soccer fields.

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