

# Using Positive Youth Development through sport to promote the United Nations Millennium Development Goals

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# Outline

- Literature Review
  - United Nations Millennium Development Goals
  - Youth Sport
- Purpose of the Study
- Procedures
- Results
- Conclusion

# Literature Review

- United Nations Millennium Development Goals
  - (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
  - (2) Achieve universal primary education
  - (3) Promote gender equality and empower women
  - (4) Reduce child mortality
  - (5) Improve maternal health
  - (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
  - (7) Ensure environmental sustainability
  - (8) Develop global partnerships for development

# Literature Review

## ■ Youth Sport

- Coaches' behaviors influenced children's self-perception, enjoyment, adherence, and psychosocial development (Smith et al., 1978, 1979).
- Coach training programs influenced coaches' communication skills, players' abilities to listen and learn, and team cohesion (Newin, Bloom, & Loughead, 2008).
- Coaches who participated in education programs had athletes with increased self-esteem and self-worth, scholastic competence, and ability to work with others (Smith & Smoll, 2002; Smoll et al., 1993).

# Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate coaches' perceptions of activities that were framed around the principles of PYD to address the United Nations Millennium Development Goals of health, education, and empowering women.

# Procedures

## ■ Overview

- 6 basketball or soccer teams (athletes aged 11-17)
- 4 activities:
  - Practice with CIS Athlete (UN MDG: Education)
  - Healthy Team Meal (UN MDG: Health)
  - Co-ed Practice (UN MDG: Empowering women)
  - Hoops for health fundraiser (UN MDG: Health)
- Length: 45 minutes
- Frequency: every 4 weeks

# Procedures

- Semi-structured interviews at the end of the season
- Pre and post-intervention forms
- Research assistants' field notes
- Reflective journal

# Results

- Coaches felt the project promoted behaviors related to the indicators of PYD:
  - Competence
  - Confidence
  - Connection
  - Caring and compassion
  - Character
- Coaches thought the activities successfully promoted the three UN MDGs: health, education, and empowering women.



# Results

- Improved UN MDGs

- Health:

“I think the players gained a lot from going to the grocery store because we have been to two tournaments and they are always asking ‘Coach, can I have this?’, and you have a kid saying ‘Hey, you’re not supposed to eat that before a game’. They definitely learned from it. For the first time I had a team that was not looking to go to McDonald’s at every team trip. It didn’t come up at all.”

# Results

- Improved UN MDGs

- Education:

“I think the visit from the McGill players helped raise awareness to education. Two of the kids in particular started talking about playing basketball when they are in university. . . . So it promoted awareness and dialog. The kids had good questions. The two players talking about university are among the players on my team that have problems in school. So it could’ve changed their mind and mentality about education. We’ll see down the road.”

# Results

- Improved UN MDGs
  - Empowering women:

“I noticed some of the girls were teaching the boys some skills and how to do the drills. . . . For the girls it’s a challenge to play against someone who’s stronger than them. At the same time they realized ‘Actually, I know more than him’, so it’s a good thing. I noticed that when that happened the boys weren’t taking it in a negative way. I think overall it was a good thing for them individually and as a team.”

# Conclusion

- Youth sport coaches had positive perceptions of the use of PYD strategies in sport.
- The participants felt that the PYD activities were successfully implemented in sports and promoted social and life skills to youth athletes.
- In addition, the coaches felt the activities built team cohesion and improved communication between youth players.
- The findings suggest that PYD is an appropriate avenue to address the UN MDGs through sport.

"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to unite in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination."

Nelson Mandela

Thank you

Questions / Comments