

An Intervention Program for Promoting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals through Youth Sport

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Outline

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 - United Nations Millennium Development Goals
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Literature

- 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

■ Youth Sport

- Coaches' attitudes, values, and goals influence children's experiences in sport and their personal development (Smith & Smoll, 2002; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1978, 1979).
- Coaches' behaviors influences children's enjoyment and adherence to sport and their self-perception, self-esteem, and psychosocial development (Pelletier, Fortier, Vallerand, & Brière, 2001; Smoll & Smith, 1996).

Literature

■ Coach Training

- Coaches who participate in training programs have athletes with increased self-esteem and self-worth, scholastic competence, ability to work with others, and improved communication skills (Fejgin, 1994; Newin, Bloom, & Loughead, 2008).
- Trained coaches are more likely to have athletes exhibit positive behaviors (CET: Smith & Smoll, 2002; MAC: Smith, Smoll, & Cummings, 2007).

Literature

■ Coach Training

- Coach Effectiveness Training program (CET: Smith & Smoll, 2002).
 - Focus on mastering skills other than beating the opponent;
 - Use reinforcement and encouragement to strengthen team environment;
 - Establish norms that promote help and support among players;
 - Involve athletes in the decision-making process regarding the team;
 - Initiate behavioral feedback and use self-monitoring

Activities

- Our activities were created using a four stage workshop protocol (Carron & Spink, 1993)
 - Introductory stage
 - Conceptual stage
 - Practical stage
 - **Healthy Team Meal** (UN MDG: Health)
 - **Hoops for Health Fundraiser** (UN MDG: Health)
 - **Practice with College Athlete** (UN MDG: Education)
 - **Co-ed Practice** (UN MDG: Empowering Women)
 - Intervention stage

Activities

- Healthy Team Meal
 - Goal: Promote health.
 - Canadian National food guide.
 - Players were taken to a grocery store and allowed to choose and purchase (healthy) food for a team meal.
 - After buying the food, the players, the coach, and the research coordinator met for a team meal.
 - The research coordinator and the coaches led a discussion using the purchased products as examples of good and bad food choices.

Activities

- Hoops for Health Fundraiser
 - Goal: Promote health.
 - The youth players held a fundraiser and then donated basketball equipment to a community center that assisted youth who did not typically engage in physical activity.
 - The donation ceremony was followed by a basketball clinic run by the youth players in our study.
 - The coaches helped the players choose the drills to run at the clinic and encouraged their players to interact with the participating children.

Activities

- Practice with College Athlete
 - Goal: Promote education.
 - A college athlete, with similar ethnic and cultural background, visited the players during one of their practices and led them through a variety of drills.
 - Afterwards, the athlete spoke to the children about the importance of education.
 - The coach gave positive feedback during the drills, and encouraged the children to ask questions to the college athlete during the talk.

Activities

- Co-ed Practice
 - Goal: Empower women.
 - Boys and girls practiced together in a collaborative (non-competitive) way.
 - Teams of the opposite gender were invited to practice with those participating in the project. Age and competitive categories were taken in consideration when matching the boys and girls teams.
 - After the activity, coaches talked to their athletes about the importance of team work and sport strategies. During this talk coaches reinforced the message of gender equality.

Results

- Coaches thought the activities successfully promoted the three UN MDGs:
 - **Health**
 - **Education**
 - **Empowering women**
- Coaches also observed increased **cohesion** and **communication** between their players.

Results

- Healthy Team Meal

“I think the players gained a lot from this activity because we have been to two tournaments and they are always asking “Coach, can I eat this?”, and you have a kid saying “Hey, you’re not supposed to eat that before a game”. They definitely learned from it. For example, [when we travelled] I didn’t have to worry about players wanting to eat junk food. . . . Honestly, it’s the first time I had a team that were not looking to go to McDonalds. It didn’t come up at all.”

Results

- Hoops for Health Fundraiser

“It was good for the players to experience this, especially because it was locally. The community center was 5-10 min from where some of them live. They were able to see what is going on in their community.”

“It was a nice way to give back and show what the players had learned. The community center kids might not have been the most talented, but they didn’t give up. The players were always encouraging the kids that might have wanted to give up. They gave confidence to the kids. It was really nice to see.”

Results

- Practice with College Athlete

“I think the activity was good for some players education wise. [One] player’s mother told me he didn’t do homework last year and this year he is doing it. Actually a good example was a month ago, she said that he was called to go out but he said “No, I’m going to go do homework”, because he had a game on the weekend and no time.”

Results

- Co-ed Practice

“I think the boys probably noticed the heart and intensity the girls put into it. . . . Especially in practice, girls do things a lot differently, so they might have seen what it takes to compete at their level.”

“I noticed that some of the girls were explaining to the boys how to do the drills. . . . For the girls it’s a challenge to play against stronger players. At the same time they realize “Actually, I know more than him”, so it’s a good thing. I noticed the boys weren’t taking it negatively either. I think it was a good thing for them individually and as a team.”

Results

- Cohesion and Communication

“The activities were an outside of practice bonding experience for the players. . . . There really isn’t much bonding outside of practice, so it definitely brought in some cohesion to these guys. In a way, it’s been really beneficial for our team to have activities outside of practice. ”

“Communication was not part of the program, but is a quality I felt emerged. When you are doing activities that you are not used to, there are a lot of things that you need to do that you don’t normally do, and communication becomes a key. The team’s communication was developed because of some of these activities. ”

Conclusions

- Coaches observed differences between the players' behaviors and attitudes before and after the activities.
- The role of the coach can go beyond teaching sport skills and winning games. Coaches can mentor their youth players to making positive life decisions and promote well being (Bloom, 1985; Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998; Smith & Smoll, 2002).
- The workshop was effective in training coaches to apply the principles of youth coaching and to address the UN MDGs.

Conclusions

- The effectiveness of the activities may differ depending on cities and countries (Boon & Gilbert, 2010).
- This program fills a void between the theory and practice of implementing the UN MDGs in sport. The activities created offer specific action strategies for sport coaches and professionals to address the UN MDGs with youth athletes.

"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

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