

Applying Intergroup Contact Theory to a National Sporting event in South Sudan

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This paper attempts to use Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory (ICT) as a framework for analysing sport for development and peace (SDP) programming aimed at achieving the goals of social change in South Sudan, where ethnic tensions are increasing. The results showed that in an environment of increasing inter-ethnic tensions, the national sport event designed programmes with optimal conditions for the development of contact effects that can change perceptions of other ethnic groups through contact and reduce inter-ethnic prejudice. And this perception was found to be entrenched even more than a year later. This suggests that ICT is a useful conceptual framework for designing, delivering and evaluating SDP programmes in conflict-affected countries. In addition to the four optimal conditions for the contact effect of Allport, the paper proposes an additional important condition for conflict-affected countries: a space for peaceful coexistence.

Keywords: intergroup contact theory, sport, development, peacebuilding, South Sudan, conflict

Received April 12, 2023

Accepted October 13, 2023

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INTRODUCTION

South Sudan is the most recent United Nations (UN) member state, having seceded from Sudan on 9 July 2011. The country has experienced two major internal conflicts since independence, and a transitional government has been established on the basis of a peace agreement. However, progress on the peace agreement has been slow, and the political and security situation remains unstable, with a decline in trust among the citizens and ethnic groups, as well as between the citizens and the government (Kuol, 2020). Therefore, there is a need to reduce ethnic tensions and prejudices and to work towards unity.

The country is ranked as one of the poorest and the international community has been committed to social and economic development for the newly born country. At the same time, however, not enough has been done towards the social cohesion necessary for nation-building (Furukawa, 2021). Against this backdrop, a national sport event called the National Unity Day (NUD) was held in January 2016 under the theme 'Peace and Unity' by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MOCYS)¹ with support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The event was held in Juba for about 10 days with football (men) and athletics (men and women) competitions, with representative athletes selected from each of the 10 regions and two administrative areas across the country. Since then, the event has been held annually in the capital city of Juba (not held in 2021 due

¹ As a result of the reorganisation of ministries and agencies, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports became Ministry of Youth and Sports.

to the spread of corona infection). Through intergroup contact among athletes who are mixed with different ethnic groups, NUD is expected to enhance unity among them.

The effects of sport in strengthening social capital such as trust among athletes have been verified in the previous studies of sport for development and peace (SDP) (Richardson & Fletcher, 2020), but the application of intergroup contact theory (ICT) to manifest the effects in SDP programmes has been limited (Schulenkorf & Sherry, 2021). Therefore, it was decided to conduct a survey among athletes who participated in NUDs in order to verify the conditions of intergroup contact effects in NUDs through interviewing them.² However, it is difficult to conduct a nationwide survey of participating athletes scattered across the country. In this context, a Peace Ambassadors workshop was held in Juba in April 2021 for athletes who participated in the past NUDs. By this opportunity, we carried out the survey to the participants of the peace ambassador workshop to look back on NUDs as the awareness of NUDs had taken root more than a year after their participation in the event. The participants will then consider whether NUD had the optimal conditions to reduce prejudice against other ethnic groups due to the intergroup contact effect. By doing so, we hope to accumulate examples of the application of the ICT to SDP programmes as part of peacebuilding support.

To summarise the results of the analysis, the results showed that in an environment of increasing inter-ethnic tensions, NUDs designed programmes with optimal conditions for the development of contact effects that can change perceptions of other ethnic groups through contact and reduce inter-ethnic prejudice. And this perception was found to be entrenched even more than a year later. This suggests that ICTs are a useful conceptual framework for designing, delivering and evaluating SFD programmes in SDP programmes in conflict-affected countries. In addition to the four optimal conditions for the contact effect of Allport, the paper proposes an additional important condition for conflict-affected countries: a space for peaceful coexistence.

This paper is structured as follows: after explaining about South Sudan and conflict, this is followed by presenting literature reviews, the research methods, the sample overview, the application of ICT in NUDs and the results of the analysis of contact effects, before concluding this paper.

SOUTH SUDAN AND CONFLICT

South Sudan was subjected to half a century of conflict before gaining independence from Sudan in 2011. After Sudan gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1956, the former Sudan's policy of divide and rule, a policy that separated the Muslim communities in the north from the 'ethnic' communities in the south and governed the north and south as almost separate countries, was inherited (Searcy, 2019). In the south, opposition to these policies favouring northern interests grew, and in 1983 General John Garang (a Dinka) rebelled against the government and formed the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M), led by General Garang (Ottaway & El-Sadany, 2012). However, the SPLA/M was not monolithic and in 1991, Machar (now Vice-President) and others defected from the Garang leadership and the SPLA/M split. Machar and his men (the Nuer) massacred an estimated 2,000 civilians in Boru and thousands of internal refugees in Jonglei (Cockett, 2010). Dinka civilians were the main victims. During this period, Northern Sudan also deliberately fuelled ethnic conflict by reorganising the 10 states in the southern region into three states according to the areas inhabited by major ethnic groups (Ottaway

² It is not only the athletes but also the spectators who are important targets for contact through sport. While recognizing this point, the conflict in South Sudan has a history of political use of youth for the conflict, which is why the NUD was held for youth. They are from all over the country, and it is important for them to be united through contact with other athletes of different ethnic groups, and to spread the message of peace and unity by returning to their hometowns with the experiences they gained through the NUD. It is also expected that the prejudice against other ethnic groups in the local community will be reduced. Therefore, in this paper, we have targeted the athletes in line with the NUD's objectives. On the other hand, it is also important to examine the spectators, and we would like to consider this as a subject for future research.

& El-Sadany, 2012). After years of internal conflict, in January 2011, a referendum was held on the question of whether or not South Sudan should secede, with over 98percent enthusiastic support, and in July 2011 the country became the world's newest member state of the UN.

However, political relations between President Kiir and the opposition led by Vice-President Machar deteriorated, leading to the outbreak of the first domestic conflict since independence in December 2013. Although the crisis started as a political issue, the ethnic conflict was behind it. Ethnic tensions, which existed mainly between Mr Machar's Nuer and Mr Kiir's Dinka ethnic groups, rose sharply. Tens of thousands of people were killed and more than a million displaced in the conflict (Nyadera, 2018). Ongoing political tensions between President Kiir, Vice-President Machar and their militias continued and conflict erupted again in July 2016. The highly militarised environment in Juba increased ethnic tensions (Kuol, 2020). The existence of ethnic tensions is underpinned by the existence of ethnic identities that are stronger than national identities, with ethnic hostility and competition fuelled by malignant mobilisation and rhetoric and political competition being the main root causes of the development into deadly ethnic conflict (Nyadera, 2018).

The tribes of South Sudan comprise 64, with the Dinka 35.8percent and Nuer 15.6percent being the most populous³, with the largest tribe, the Dinka, taking control of the new South Sudan government (Edward, 2016). Cultural and tribal prejudices and conflicts have existed between the Dinka and Nuer for some time now (Arnold & Alden 2015), and Edward (2016) notes that politicians, traditional and religious leaders often fight with other tribes for selfish reasons, cattle raids, overt warfare, and more recently political power, etc., and that they have used them to rally their respective tribes to fight other tribes. The introduction of modern weapons has also led to the expansion and amplification of tribal competition and prejudice (Arnold & Alden, 2015). This prevalence of tribalism has been cited as a factor that has intensified conflict between many communities in South Sudan, due to tribes judging each other by stereotypes (Laurence, Schmid, & Hewstone, 2019) and lack of knowledge, as well as negative assumptions about each other (Edward, 2016).

South Sudan has a long history of conflict, but the context of conflict differs between pre- and post-independence. Before independence, the conflict was about securing autonomy and independence for Southern Sudan, whereas after independence, the conflict went from a dispute over the presidency to more of an ethnic conflict. However, common to both periods are the constant presence of ethnic conflicts and tensions, and the challenges posed by the complex relationships between ethnic groups in promoting a peace agreement. In order to resolve these challenges and promote new state-building, inter-ethnic cohesion has become indispensable. At the same time, inter-ethnic contacts are important to enhance inter-ethnic cohesion, but the situation is such that inter-regional exchanges are restricted due to insecurity (Furukawa, 2022b). How inter-ethnic contacts can be established is an important issue.

SDP AND INTERGROUP CONTACT THEORY

Since the end of the Cold War, conflict patterns have changed markedly from conflicts between states to civil wars between domestic groups. Conflicts over political power and economic interests, as well as differences in people's identities regarding ethnicity, religion and language that spur violence, have increased (Jenson, 2010). With the increase in civil wars between states and then between national groups, there has been a shift in the nature of peacebuilding support, with an increasing number of examples of SDP, which previously had few examples (Jeanes et al., 2019). This was triggered by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the UN in September 2000; in 2003, the UN mentioned sport in its Towards Achieving the MDGs as a useful tool for development and

³ Central Intelligence Agency 2015 World Factbook - South Sudan. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/od.html> [Last accessed 1 March 2023].

peace, and that it would promote better integration through sport (Kidd, 2008). Sport is then recognised as a tool for peacebuilding and strengthening social cohesion and social inclusion. Meanwhile, research in the field of conflict reduction has been conducted in a variety of academic disciplines, and has investigated the effectiveness of contact in reconciliation, forgiveness and trust in a range of historically divided contexts. For example, there is growing evidence of the various positive social cohesion and enhanced social inclusion that contact can bring about in South Africa (Gibson, 2004), Northern Ireland (Niens & Cairns, 2005) and ethnically diverse communities in the UK (Schmid et al., 2014).

For ICT, Allport (1954) is often cited. Allport (1954) stated that the presence of four positive characteristics - (1) equal status of the groups in the situation, (2) common goals, (3) intergroup cooperation and (4) support of authorities, laws and customs - would result in a reduction of intergroup prejudice, and these four optimal conditions of contact, as indicated by Allport (1954), continue to be important guidelines when designing intergroup exchange experiences that bring together people from different social groups, including sports projects (Schulenkorf & Sherry, 2021). Regarding the effects of intergroup contact, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) used a meta-analysis to evaluate 515 contact studies involving more than 250 000 people in 38 countries and found that positive interpersonal contact with members of out-groups significantly reduced out-group prejudice. It also suggests that positive intergroup contact may lead to a reduction in anxiety, collective threat and personal threat. On the other hand, despite the proven effectiveness of ICT in the field of conflict research, Schulenkorf and Sherry (2021) found ICT has rarely been applied to Sport for Development (SFD) interventions as attempted to apply it in Papua New Guinea. Specifically, they demonstrated the usefulness of ICT through a retrospective analysis of League Bilong Laif, which became an education-focused SFD intervention in the country. In addition to Allport's four optimal conditions, their study also proposed the aspect of 'cultural relevance and potential for excitement' as an additional key condition for achieving meaningful intergroup development. They then showed that ICT can be a useful framework for designing and implementing SFD interventions, particularly in situations where intergroup tensions exist.

For the NUD in South Sudan, the subject of this paper, Furukawa (2022a, b) analysed 354 athletes who participated in NUD5, based on cross-sectional data and testimonies collected during the NUD, in order to examine whether the athletes were able to increase cohesion among themselves throughout the event. The results verified that, in a society deeply divided by conflict, the athletes' social capital, such as 'trust and cooperation norms', 'reciprocity' and 'networks' towards other ethnic groups, increased through their interaction in the NUD (Furukawa, 2022a, b). However, there is no indication of the conditions under which contact effects were constructed, or whether ICT can be applied to SDP projects in conflict-affected countries. Hover et al. (2016) also state that sports competitions promote participation in mass sports, help shape individual attitudes and beliefs and contribute to social cohesion (the development of shared values, agendas and trust within communities), but it is noted that these effects are often short-lived and temporary. Therefore, in order to demonstrate the usefulness of ICTs for SDP programmes in conflict-affected countries, we examine whether the four optimal conditions for developing contact effects were internalised in the NUD. In conducting the survey, the opportunity of the Peace Ambassador workshop held in April 2021, which brought together past NUD participants in Juba for the first time, was used. The participants were asked to reflect on the NUD on the assumption that the perceptions of other ethnic groups gained from the NUD were well established, as it had been at least one year since their participation in the NUDs. By analysing their reflections, the aim is to verify the usefulness of ICT through sport in conflict-affected countries and to accumulate a new case study in the field.

NATIONAL UNITY DAY AND PEACE AMBASSADOR WORKSHOP

Based on the concept and management of the first NUD, the NUD is held in Juba every year. The theme of the NUD was 'Peace and Unity', bringing together athletes from different regions and ethnic groups from across the country. The selection of sports disciplines was based on the criterion that the sport should be played throughout the country (MOCYS, JICA, interview 2015). Football, athletics, basketball and volleyball were among the candidates, but men's football and athletics (men and women), which are widely practised in the country, were ultimately selected. It was also decided that the competitions would be open to athletes under 20 years of age, as it was recognised that in the conflict situation in South Sudan, youth are key to 'peace and unity' (MOCYS, JICA, interview 2015). In terms of sporting events, the first NUD consisted of football (men) and athletics (women), but from the third NUD onwards, volleyball (women) was added, and wrestling (men) was added in the fifth NUD. The accommodation for the athletes was the Lombourg Teachers' Training Institute in Juba for the 1st NUD, and the Multipurpose Training Centre in Juba for the 3rd NUD and onwards. The opening ceremony included speeches by senior officials of the Government of South Sudan and representatives of key stakeholders, as well as cultural appreciation (singing, dancing, etc.). In addition, a 'Peace and Culture Day' was organised before the games, which included non-sporting events and various peace-related workshops.

Both tournaments were attended by about 350 athletes from 10 regions and two administrative districts, Abyei and Pibor, representing the regions.⁴ JICA and the MOCYS reported that in each tournament, all matches were played peacefully and there were no problems with referees. Each match was open to the public free of charge, and each match attracted approximately 600 spectators surrounding the ground, and the closing ceremony, as well as the opening ceremony, included speeches from the organisers and an award ceremony for the best athletes and teams (Furukawa, 2022b).

For the Peace Ambassadors workshop, it was held on 20 and 21 April 2021 at the Nile Beach Hotel in Juba. Attendees included state government representatives, athletes from each state who had participated in previous NUDs, coaches and the MOCYS Task Force. For the participants from the athletes, two male and two female athletes from each state were in principle selected by the coaches of the sports teams from each state, without any preference for the type of sport. As a result, 48 athletes participated in the workshop. Note that no selection was made on the basis of ethnicity (MOCYS, JICA, interview 2021). The workshop included a lecture on the role of peace ambassadors and the development of an action plan, as former NUD participants were expected to return to their local communities and take on the role of peace ambassadors.

METHOD

The author attended the first NUD in 2016, the third NUD in 2018 and the fourth NUD in 2019, visited the athletes' accommodation and interviewed athletes and MOCYS and JICA. The research for this paper was then conducted on 18 and 19 April 2021, just prior to the workshop. As the author was unable to go to the field due to the corona outbreak, the questionnaire was developed by the author. Based on the questionnaire, six South Sudanese enumerators went to the Nile Beach Hotel in Juba with the cooperation of JICA to conduct face-to-face questionnaires and qualitative interviews in English or Juba Arabic. The survey was initiated with the informed consent of the participants, after explaining the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of the NUD. The study was

⁴The 10 regions in South Sudan are: Greater Jonglei, Greater Lakes, Greater Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Greater Unity, Greater Upper Nile, Greater Warrap, Greater Western Bahr el Ghazal, Greater Central Equatoria, Greater Eastern Equatoria, and Greater Western Equatoria. The 2 administration areas are Abyei and Pibor.

also formally approved by the Ethics Committee of the author's university (Ref. No. 2021, 2-53).

The 48 athletes who took part in the workshop were randomly divided into eight groups, each group consisting of six participants. Each group was then assigned one of the six enumerators to conduct the athlete survey one athlete at a time. The survey items included personal attributes (e.g. gender, age, level of education, number of NUD participation, place of origin, ethnicity, etc.), experience in NUDs and trust in other ethnic groups, with the exception of age and level of education.

Following the questionnaires, open-ended qualitative interviews were conducted to further develop awareness of the impact of NUDs. By the end of day one, the data collection team was able to complete the questionnaires for 46 athletes, but two athletes did not turn up at the allocated time and were therefore absent on day one. In addition, three athletes refused to be recorded, so their answers to the qualitative section were written down during the interview. Questions asked in the qualitative interviews included questions about learning from the NUD, changes in their perception toward other ethnic groups as a result of participating in the NUD, situation of interactions with friends built through the NUD, and so forth.

SAMPLE OVERVIEW

An overview of the participating athletes from the survey results shows that of the 48 athletes, three had never participated in a NUD before. Therefore, 45 athletes with NUD participation experience were included in the analysis. 16 were male and 29 were female: 10 were football athletes, 18 were female volleyball athletes, six were male athletes and 11 were female athletes. The average age of the participants was 19 years old. One participated in the first, second, third and fifth NUDs, one participated in the second NUD, one participated in the third and fourth NUDs, one participated in the third to fifth NUDs, one participated in the third and fifth NUDs, 13 participated in the fourth NUD, seven participated in the fourth NUD and 20 participated in the 5th NUD. The educational level of the athletes was five (11percent) with primary education, 39 (87percent) with secondary education and one (two percent) with higher education. In terms of tribal composition, 13 tribes were represented, with 25 (56percent) Dinka, four (9percent) Nuer Azande and three (6.67percent) Otuho each. Regarding religion, 32 (71percent) were Catholic, 5 (11percent) were Anglican and three (6.67percent) were Adventist, Anglican and Pentecostal respectively. The breakdown of their respective states of origin was as follows: three from Upper Nile, two from Jonglei, four from Unity, five from Warrap, two from Northern Bahr el Ghazal, four from Western Bahr el Ghazal, four from Lakes State, three from Western Equatoria, nine from Central Equatoria, four from Eastern Equatoria, one from Pibor and four from Abyei.

When asked in the survey whether your close relatives/friends died or go missing in the December 2013 and/or July 2016 conflicts, 14 (31percent) athletes said their close relatives died or go missing, two athletes (4percent) said their close friends died or go missing, and 9 (20percent) replied both, so that 25 (56percent) athletes stated that a close relative and/or a close friend died or go missing. When asked about whether their current residence was the same as it was before the December 2013 and/or July 2016 conflicts, 12 (27percent) said it was different. This showed how significant the impact of the two conflicts had been.

APPLICATION OF ICT TO NUDS

First, drawing on the contact theory framework presented by Allport (1954), this paper examines whether the NUD was designed based on the four optimal conditions of intergroup contact to reduce or eliminate prejudice that exist between ethnic groups. The analysis will be conducted using field visits, interviews with MOCYS and JICA, and testimonies from athletes.

Equal Status Within the Contact Situation

The equal status of the athletes who participated in the NUD is to be determined from the way the athletes for NUD were selected and how they were treated during the NUD. Firstly, the selection process for the athletes is supposed to be carried out by the state MOCYS in cooperation with the local sport associations in the region, who organise selection meetings. However, the financial situation in South Sudan is difficult, and in some states selection meetings were not held due to budgetary constraints, often leaving the authority for selection to coaches and local sports associations (Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports Republic of South Sudan, 2018). However, in terms of selection criteria, the most talented athletes from each region were selected, and athletes were selected on the basis of their records and abilities, with equal standards regardless of ethnicity.

Secondly, fairness is an important aspect of the treatment of the athletes during the NUD. Therefore, in order to ensure transparency and fairness in the management of the NUD, based on the NUD experience, in September 2018 the MOCYS, with the support of JICA, prepared the 'Manual for National Unity Day'. In the manual, Chapter one describes the members of the NUD Organising Committee (Undersecretary of the MOCYS, Director General, representatives of sports associations (national and local), MOCYS task force heads and key partner representatives), the role of state governments, and the role of administrative officers and coaches (Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports Republic of South Sudan, 2018). In the athlete selection (Chapter four), the criteria for selecting athletes are clearly stated as age, origin and number of previous NUDs attended, with the age set at Under 20 and the rule that athletes who have participated in two previous NUDs cannot participate a third time, with the aim of encouraging more young people to participate in NUDs. It also outlines the competition rules (Chapter eight), Peace and Culture Day (Chapter 14), etc. In line with this NUD Manual, a Technical Committee has been set up to ensure that strict rules are enforced in order to treat athletes fairly and equally. For example, members of the Technical Committee meet regularly to check the selection of representative athletes and to ensure that there are no fraudulent members. With regard to the number of selected athletes' participation in previous competitions, the Technical Committee checks the athletes by referring to the list of previous competitions. There have actually been cases where irregularities were found and the list of athletes was ordered to be resubmitted to the state, and where the Yambio team brought two athletes who were not on the register, but the Technical Committee found out and the two were not given the opportunity to compete. The committee also checks the actual competitions to ensure that they are fair and that no irregularities are taking place. For example, there was a case where an athlete running out of his lane in the short distance event was disqualified for obstruction.

The athletes are accommodated for approximately 10 days at the Teacher Training College in Juba for the first and second NUDs and at the Multipurpose Training Centre (MTC) in Juba from the third NUD onwards, during which time they share a room with more than 20 other athletes, rather than a private room. The allocation of rooms to the athletes was consciously decided to ensure a mix of athletes regardless of ethnicity; meals were also provided at the MTC, the athletes ate the same meals and were transported to the various stadiums on the same buses. The athletes testified that they worked with athletes of different ethnicities.

- "We move together, we share things together as one people." (Nyangwara, Female, Greater Unity, Athletics).
- "We are all eating together and sleeping together and no one is causing trouble." (Dinka, Female, Abyei, Volleyball)
- "NUD provides an environment where people come together and share the same thing regardless of their states, tribes or origins." (Dinka, Female, Greater Jonglei, Volleyball)

The fact that a single set of rules applied to all athletes and that all athletes were treated equally and on an equal footing according to these rules shows that the athletes had equal status within the contact situation during the NUD.

Common Goals

The NUD has been organised under the theme of ‘peace and unity’, as ethnic tensions have been rising amidst recurring conflicts since independence (Kuol, 2020). The athletes gathered in Juba to represent the region for that common goal. The outline, theme and efforts to build peace through sport were announced at a press conference (by the MOCYS) and through broadcasts by several television and radio stations, and the opening and closing ceremonies and the football final were introduced through live broadcasts, thus sending a message of peace and unity to the public at large. The message of peace and solidarity was widely conveyed to the public. This has helped to ensure that the goal of peace and unity is widely shared not only by the athletes, but also by the public and recognised as a common goal of NUDs. The testimonies of the athletes provide some insight into this.

- “All that happened in the workshops was all about peace. And I think that is the reason that brought all of us together to have to implement peace.” (Nyangwara, Female, Greater Central Equatoria, Athletics)
- “National Unity Day, we unite, contact with each other, learn, stay.” (Dinka, Male, Greater Lakes, Athletics)
- “I learn about so many things and I feel that it’s good for youth because it (NUD) make these young people forget about their tribes or where they come from while enjoying sports and socializing with one another freely. It makes me realize that peace is possible.” (Nuer, Female, Greater Unity, Volleyball)
- “I wasn’t knowing what peace is all about because whenever you want to tell me something bad, I can easily fight you, but since I joined NUD, I have come and learn what is peace and actually right now I don’t fight people because I have understood what peace is.” (Dinka, Female, Greater Lakes, Athletics).

Peace and unity are thus perceived by NUDs as the common goal among the athletes.

Intergroup Cooperation

In the NUD, the Peace Games were held, in which mixed teams were formed, regardless of affiliation, and athletes played tug-of-war, tripod and other games in which they had to work together. Various workshops on peace were also held. Specifically, a painting workshop, a peace song workshop and a peace message workshop were organised, where athletes were divided into mixed state teams under the guidance of a facilitator and members of the same team worked together to create a painting, song or message on ‘peace’ for each. At the end of the workshop, the athletes performed their songs, drawings and messages in front of the other athletes and at the opening and closing ceremonies, the athletes marched in front of the audience with their drawings and messages to convey the message of peace. Furthermore, athletes practised together with athletes from other teams and shared sports equipment, and intergroup cooperation was observed in scattered instances, regardless of ethnicity. In the accommodation, group behaviour was observed, with people sharing food, clothing and shelter and spending time together in peace.

The following testimonies of athletes illustrate this.

- “It was amazing to see people all participating together, they are doing everything together with unity, no discrimination, we come and find different races, like we stay in the same place, we eat in the same place so everything is just good.” (Dinka, Female, Pibor, Volleyball).
- “I learn about peaceful coexistence and how people can stay together in peace with one another. When I first came to NUD, I have never seen a Nuer and all these other tribes before, but we met here and unite together even though we came from different places.” (Dinka, Female, Abyei, Volleyball).
- “We played together and we shared our things.” (Dinka, Female, Greater Western Bahr el Ghazal, Volleyball).

The NUD shows that the programme and living environment were designed in such a way that cooperation

between groups took place in a natural way. In addition, messages of peace and unity were repeatedly uttered in the tournament speeches and workshops, fostering a sense of cooperation towards unity among the athletes. In this way, the potential tensions arising from the inherently competitive nature of the sport were strategically addressed to encourage cooperation among all participants.

Support of Authorities, Law or Custom

The NUD has been organised every year, mainly by MOCYS with support from JICA, after a preparation period of more than six months. In the advance preparation of the NUD, as contact with the states was difficult due to problems with mobile networks and PC skills, the MOCYS, with the cooperation of JICA, invited representatives of the state sports ministries from the 12 participating teams to Juba and meetings have been organised to discuss the significance, objectives and rules of the NUD.

In addition, as the budgets of the Government and MOCYS have been depleted due to the conflict, not only MOCYS but also many other stakeholders are bearing the costs of organising NUDs. For example, in the 5th NUD, JICA covered the costs of the athletics and volleyball teams, and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) covered the costs of the wrestling team's travel from the states to Juba. As for the football teams, the respective state governments bore the costs. In addition, the following organisations provided sponsorship.

- UNMISS: Leveling playgrounds, Providing facilitators for workshops, Sensitization
- UNDP: Providing track suits, Hosting wrestling matches
- Universal Printers Ltd.: Providing banners and posters
- RCS Communications: Providing T-shirts
- JIN Cooperation : Providing Uniforms for Football, Volleyball and Athletics
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation: Providing Medical staff, drugs and referee for Peace games

Thus, the NUD has been organised with the support of many actors.

In addition, as mentioned above, impartiality was important in the organisation of the competitions because of the high level of ethnic tension in the South Sudanese context, and it was also extremely important for the athletes, who had lost close relatives and friends to the conflict, to stay and compete in a safe environment. In order to ensure fairness and safety, the NUD was implemented under strict rules, with a NUD Organising Committee and a Technical Committee to ensure fairness, as mentioned above. As for safety measures, during the games, the competition venues and accommodation areas were secured with the cooperation of the police, and an environment was created in which the athletes could concentrate on competition, feel safe and live in peace. As a result, all matches were held peacefully and there were no problems with the competition referees.

The athletes also testified that their safety was ensured.

- “There is no insecurity there and we were staying in peace.” (Dinka, Female, Greater Western Bahr el Ghazal, Volleyball).

As indicated above, it can be seen that NUDs met the four optimal conditions for ICT given by Allport (1954).

INTERGROUP CONTACT EFFECTS

From the athletes' reflections on their NUDs, we shall see whether prejudice between other ethnic groups was reduced through intergroup contact at the NUD. The following testimonies show the change in perceptions of other

ethnic groups.

- “My perception (of other tribes) has changed because I no longer see other tribes as enemies or threat.” (Dinka, Female, Greater Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Athletics)
- “You will be forced to have hate toward other tribes, so it change that a lot in my mind and now everyone is the same.” (Kuku, Male, Greater Central Equatoria, Football).
- “Sometimes people just decide to hate others because of what they hear or what they have heard, but coming here and meet all these guys from almost all the tribes help me change my opinion about other tribe. I love them all now.” (Nuer, Female, Greater Unity, Volleyball).
- “It has really changed mostly the mindset. How I see some tribes. The way I have some negative information about them, I managed to prove it to be wrong. What I’ve seen now is true.” (Nyangwara, Female, Greater Central Equatoria, Athletics).
- “We came and discovered like when they say certain tribes have this and that, as we come and interact with them. I don’t think there is any difference between us, we are all the same.” (Dinka, Female, Pibor, Volleyball).

And all of those surveyed stated that they have become friends with athletes of other ethnic groups through their contacts at the NUDs, and that their friendships continue to this day. Their testimonies include like

- “I have learn how to interact with other clans, I have learn how to interact with other people from other states like I have made so many friends and also, I get to know them and I have contacted them.” (Dinka, Female, Greater Lakes, Athletics)

The athletes defined NUD as “living together and interacting with other athletes from different states” (Dinka, Female, Greater Warrap, Volleyball), “to love each other, respect each other, trust each other” (Otuho, Female, Greater Eastern Equatoria, Athletics), “unity and togetherness” (Azande, Female Azande, Female, Greater, Western Equatoria, Athletics), “peaceful coexistence with other people” (Mundari, Male Pibor, Football), “unity, love, togetherness, and there is no tribalism”(Nyangwara, Female, Greater Unity, Athletics). This means that the NUD was a place where people could live together in a peaceful environment, where respect and trust could be developed through contact, and where unity and peaceful coexistence could be experienced. This indicates that, in addition to the four optimum conditions proposed for the contact effect, the development of an environment where different ethnic groups can live together in peace and security is important for enhancing the contact effect. Therefore, in addition to the four optimum conditions, it may be important in conflict-affected countries to add ‘a place of peaceful coexistence’.

CONCLUSION

This paper attempts to use Allport’s (1954) ICT as a framework for analysing SDP programming aimed at achieving the goals of social change in South Sudan, where ethnic tensions are increasing. The results showed that in an environment of increasing inter-ethnic tensions, NUDs designed programmes with optimal conditions for the development of contact effects that can change perceptions of other ethnic groups through contact and reduce inter-ethnic prejudice. And this perception was found to be entrenched even more than a year later. This suggests that ICTs are a useful conceptual framework for designing, delivering and evaluating SDP programmes in conflict-affected countries, as Schulenkorf and Sherry (2021) showed in the case of Papua New Guinea.

This paper points out the importance of a ‘place of peaceful coexistence’ where people can come into contact with

each other in peace and security as a condition for developing contact effects. It should be noted that the difference between NUD and other assistance programmes is that NUD provides a place of peaceful coexistence, where different ethnic groups can get to know and respect each other and live in peace through sports competitions and shared accommodation for about 10 days. In South Sudan, where interaction is restricted, living together with other ethnic groups, including hostile ethnic groups, in food, clothing and shelter is an extremely rare experience, and as far as the author knows, no other programme like this exists apart from NUD in South Sudan. The creation of such spaces has been shown to be an effective initiative in a divided society. Therefore, in addition to the four optimal conditions for the contact effect of Allport, the author would like to propose an additional important condition for conflict-affected countries: 'a space for peaceful coexistence'.

It would also be important to consider support programmes that enable a simulated experience of peaceful coexistence in inter-school sports competitions. In South Sudan, dialogue has traditionally been valued as a way of reconciliation, and in that sense, it is worth considering incorporating in the support programme a setting where intergroup contact can be deepened in a natural way.

Finally, the limitations of this paper and directions for future research should be mentioned. Firstly, this paper only analysed athletes with experience of NUD participation, so the possible effects of indirect contact on family and community members who are not directly involved in the contact situation could not be included in the analysis. This should be the subject of future research.

Acknowledgments

This paper has been prepared as part of a JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development project entitled "International Cooperation, Peace and Development through Sport." I am grateful to all staff of JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development, JICA South Sudan, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, especially Edward Settimo Yugu and Lemor William Joseph Lemor and anonymous reviewers. The views and interpretations expressed in this paper and any errors are my own and not necessarily those of JICA.

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