Sport for Development and Peace for Refugees in Kampala, Uganda

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Despite growing public attention to refugee crises around the world, scholarly investigation on refugees’ experiences in Global South nations – for example, in sub-Saharan Africa, which hosts over 26% of the world’s refugees (UNHCR, 2018a) – remains minimal (Nawyn, 2016). Such an influx of refugees in the Global South has resulted in an increased number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seeking to provide social services to refugees, including programs within the growing field of sport for development and peace (SDP). SDP is broadly defined as utilizing sport and physical activity to contribute to development objectives in underprivileged communities across the globe, for example to promote social inclusion of marginalized populations or for enhancing gender equality (Kidd, 2008). To date, however, research in the field of SDP has not yet fulsomely explored: (1) refugee-focused programs; (2) social entrepreneurship; and (3) employability (Schulenkorf, 2017; Spaaij, 2013).

The current study attempts to address these gaps through a critical investigation of a refugee-focused NGO in Kampala, Uganda, home to approximately 1.3 million displaced people (UNHCR, 2018b). The purpose of this research project is to explore the relationships between sport, SDP, social entrepreneurship, and employability within an NGO that has adopted a social enterprise model to offer social, economic and sport development to refugees. Drawing on neoliberalism, postcolonial management theory, and decolonizing methodological approaches, this participatory action research project utilized digital and visual methods, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. This presentation will focus on the design and implementation of the research project, including data collection and analysis. The significance of this research has a range of benefits for the scientific and SDP practice community including, but not limited to: advancing understandings of SDP, employability, and entrepreneurship; explicating the nuances and complexities of South-South migration; and lastly, developing innovative forms of data collection and knowledge dissemination.