The Influence of Context on Occupational Selection in Sport-for-Development

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Abstract: Sport-for-development (SFD) is a growing phenomenon involving engagement in sport activities to achieve international development goals. Kicking AIDS Out is one sport for development initiative that raises HIV/AIDS awareness through sport. Despite sport-for-development’s global prevalence, there is a paucity of literature exploring how activities are selected for use in differing contexts. An occupational perspective can illuminate the selection of activities, sport or otherwise, in sport-for-development programming and the context in which they are implemented. The purpose of the study was to understand how context influences the selection of sport activities in Kicking AIDS Out programs. Thematic analysis was used to guide the secondary analysis of qualitative data gathered with Kicking AIDS Out leaders in Lusaka, Zambia and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Findings include that leaders strive to balance their activity preferences with those activities seen as feasible and preferential within their physical, socio-historical, and cultural contexts, and that leader’s differing understandings of sport as a development tool influences their selection of activities. To enable a better fit of activities chosen for the particular context and accomplishment of international development goals, sport-for-development programmes might consider how leaders are trained to select such activities.

Keywords: occupation; sport; qualitative; Zambia; Trinidad and Tobago

1. Introduction

Initiatives addressing international development have expanded over the past three decades. While there is no universally accepted definition of development, it can be understood as “a process of enabling people’s choices and increasing the opportunities available to all members of society” [1]. An emerging trend among these initiatives is to use single ‘activities’, or in the language of occupational scientists, ‘single occupations’, as a means to address development goals [2]. A previous scoping review revealed that sport is the most widely cited occupation utilized in development initiatives [2], and these initiatives can be broadly classified as part of the Sport for Development (SFD) movement [3]. Kicking AIDS Out (KAO) is an example of an SFD initiative that uses the occupation of sport as a means to educate and raise awareness about HIV/AIDS.

SFD has faced broad criticisms, including the need for compelling evidence to support the use of sport to achieve development goals [4–7]. In addition to the need for greater empirical evidence, is the need to explore SFD from the perspective of alternative disciplines [8], and the need to understand the...
SFD movement and programmes from the perspective of staff and youth participants [7,9–11]. Coalter and Taylor [12] also argue that some of the policy approaches to SFD have inherent dangers, including “ignoring wider socio-political contexts within which sport-for-development organizations have to operate ...”, which suggests that the influence of context on SFD programmes has yet to be explored. Given the calls for sport-for-development research from alternative disciplines that considers wider socio-political contexts on programming, this study aims to stop ignoring the context, and to explore how context influences SFD programmes from an occupational perspective. Specifically, this paper will explore how context influences occupational selection in two cases of KAO; one conducted in Lusaka, Zambia and the other in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The research is guided by an occupational perspective that has not been readily included in the SFD discourse [2] and focuses on the perspectives of leaders of KAO programmes. These aspects of the research address the need for new disciplines and representation of the local voice [8,11].

An occupational perspective is defined as “a way of looking at or thinking about human doing” [13]. Some assumptions inherent in an occupational perspective are that occupations occur in particular contexts, in which occupation and context are reciprocally influential, and that occupations are idiosyncratic, hold form, and bring meaning [13,14]. Although many definitions exist, for the purposes of this study occupations are defined as “all tasks and activities in which a person engages in everyday life that are both culturally and personally meaningful” [14]. Occupational scientists also use the term ‘environment’ to encompass “external contexts, including physical, cultural, institutional, and social elements” [14]. The term ‘context’ is chosen purposefully for this paper because it is more widely understood across disciplines, and can be expanded to include the broad historical, political, and economic contexts, as well as local physical, cultural, and social structures.

1.1. Contextual Background Information

1.1.1. Kicking AIDS Out

KAO is an SFD initiative that combines HIV/AIDS education and prevention with sports and games. It was developed in 2001 by the Edusport Foundation in Zambia [15], and has since expanded into a global network [16]. KAO is an approach to SFD with a specific curriculum, and a network of organizations that use the curriculum [5]. The curriculum of KAO was developed by Oscar Mwaanga and is used as the foundation to train KAO leaders. Complete details regarding the KAO training curriculum and descriptions of leaders’ levels can be found on the KAO website at: http://www.kickingaidsout.net.

In this study, two KAO cases were explored, one in Lusaka, Zambia and one in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The information outlined in this section offers contextual background and it is against this background that our research was established, with the assumption that contexts influence and are influenced by the occupations used in SFD programmes.

1.1.2. Zambia

The Republic of Zambia is a landlocked country in southern Africa, known for its political stability and peace. It is culturally diverse with approximately 70 different tribal groups, and eight official languages including English [17]. The area was colonized in the 1800s by Britain, and peacefully transitioned to independence in 1964 [18]. Christianity is the main religion in Zambia [19]; however, other religions are practiced in the country to a lesser degree. Following independence, Zambia was the third largest copper producer in the world. In the 1970s copper prices declined, resulting in the country’s participation in structural readjustment programmes [20]. Recently, Zambia has been experiencing economic growth as a result of foreign investments in the mining sector, and growth in the agriculture, manufacturing, and service sectors [21].

Despite this economic growth, Zambia remains classified by the World Bank as a lower-middle-income country, and has not made progress in the reduction of poverty [20,21]. Limited
access to education, clean drinking water, sanitation, shelter, food, and healthcare continue to be challenges for many individuals, particularly in the rural areas of Zambia [22,23]. Poverty is a widespread challenge for the country, with low life expectancy rates and one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world at 12.4% in 2015 [24]. Zambia has a longstanding history of international aid involvement, and involvement with development agencies, particularly in regards to SFD. Zambia is one of the countries at the forefront of the SFD movement, with a significant number of SFD organizations in Zambia in comparison to other countries [9,19].

1.1.3. Trinidad and Tobago

In contrast to Zambia, the country of Trinidad and Tobago is one of the wealthiest countries in the Caribbean and is classified as a high-income economy by the World Bank [20]. Trinidad and Tobago comprises two islands between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. English is the official language, and the majority of the population identifies as Christian [25]. People of African and Indian descent inhabit the country, each comprising approximately 40% of the population. This ethnic diversity is a source of open social tension [26].

The cultural makeup of Trinidad and Tobago was influenced by its slavery and labour history. Trinidad was settled by the Spanish in 1498, and taken over by Britain in 1797 [27]. Enslaved Africans were brought to work on sugar plantations during British rule, and were emancipated in 1834 [28]. After slavery was abolished, labourers from India, China, and the Middle East were brought into the country [28]. Britain joined the smaller island Tobago with Trinidad, and the islands achieved independence in 1962 becoming the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in 1976 [27].

Trinidad and Tobago has large reserves of oil and gas. As a result of the fall of world crude oil prices during the 1980s and 1990s, the country accrued a large foreign debt resulting in high unemployment rates [26]. Trinidad and Tobago has experienced steady economic growth since that point, with an increase of international investment in liquefied natural gas, petrochemicals, and steel [26,29].

Despite the country’s economic status, Trinidad and Tobago continues to have high unemployment rates, and a significant portion of the population remains below the poverty line. The country faces numerous health issues; in the past twenty years Trinidad and Tobago has experienced a 500% increase in HIV/AIDS cases [30], and an increase in infant mortality rates [31]. The country has a recent history of involvement with the SFD movement, with multiple local and global organizations throughout the country.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

A secondary analysis was conducted to compare and contrast qualitative data from two previously conducted case studies exploring KAO in Lusaka, Zambia [19] and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago from an occupational perspective. A secondary analysis is “the use of data gathered in a previous study or collected for other purposes to test new hypotheses or answer new research questions” [32]. The concept of context was noted as prevalent throughout the data set of both previously conducted case studies and the authors, being occupational scientists, were interested in examining how these two different contexts specifically influenced KAO programming. Therefore, a secondary analysis of these two case studies was carried out to explore the influence of context on the selection of occupations as a means for development from the perspectives of the KAO leaders [33,34]. Ethics approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Board at the University of Toronto.

2.2. Participants

The original data sets were collected by researchers affiliated with the University of Toronto Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. Each parent study used a purposive
sampling technique to obtain a heterogeneous sample [35], and a total of six KAO staff from Zambia and seven from Trinidad and Tobago were recruited and interviewed, see Table 1 for the leaders’ demographics (some data remains unknown for this table, as it was not disclosed by the leaders). Interview transcripts and leaders’ information was anonymized upon analysis.

Table 1. KAO leader demographics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Time with KAO</th>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Time with KAO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>Unknown</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6 months</td>
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Individuals were approached for the studies in Zambia and Trinidad and Tobago if they: spoke English, were above the age of 18, and were KAO leaders. The interviews followed a semi-structured interview guide focused on the use of occupations or activities in KAO programming. The interview guides were initially created by the first author of the Zambian study and were then adapted for the Trinidad and Tobago study as contextually appropriate. Interview questions posed to leaders in both countries included:

- How do you choose/decide which activities to use in programming?
- How do local customs and traditions influence program activities?
- Are there particular activities that you favour/prefer to use in programming?
- What other activities do you think could be used to achieve your program aims?
- Tell me about the knowledge and skills you have that are related to the program activities.
- Have program youth suggested changes to you regarding the program activities?

In both cases, data collection was completed when data saturation was reached, meaning that the same topics were repeatedly discussed [35].

2.3. Data

The original parent studies were conducted by Njelesani, Cameron, Gibson, Nixon, and Polatajko [36] and Sangrar, Vaisberg, Njelesani, and Polatajko [37]. The authors of each original study were connected through the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at the University of Toronto. The authors of the parent study in Zambia were involved in the supervision of the research students carrying out the parent study in Trinidad and Tobago.

In both cases, data collection took place through face-to-face interviews following semi-structured interview guides as discussed above. The original data sets were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, anonymized, and stored on a password-protected computer at the University of Toronto. The two data sets were combined and added to the data management software, NVivo by QSR International, to assist with the storing, organization, and coding of the data set.

2.4. Analysis

This study employed a thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke [38], to analyze the previously collected data from the two parent studies. The analysis explored how context influenced the selection of occupations in KAO initiatives. Analysis occurred in five phases: (I) becoming familiar with the data; (II) generating initial codes; (III) searching for themes; (IV) reviewing themes; and (V) defining and naming themes [38].
Each researcher read through the interview transcripts in order to complete phase I, becoming familiar with the data. Through phase II, initial codes were generated using a provisional coding approach, which involves establishing a predetermined list of codes based on a literature review, conceptual frameworks (i.e., occupational approach), and previous findings (i.e., sport-for-development literature) [39]. A priori codes included specific programming activities, such as: “traditional games” and “football”; and programming outputs such as: “health education” and “leadership development”. This list was continually revised as coding progressed. To ensure consistency in analysis, researchers independently coded one interview and compared and discussed captured constructs. Constructs were defined and recorded in a codebook. Once consistency between researchers was established, interviews were randomly assigned, ensuring equal distribution within countries, and all remaining interviews were coded. Throughout analysis, researchers compared constructs, defined new constructs as they emerged, and re-coded interviews to capture new codes as necessary.

Once data were coded, phase III began and codes were collated into potential themes through creating theme-piles and thematic-maps [38]. Several potential themes emerged during phase IV, and researchers collapsed eight potential themes into two themes, as described below, based on novelty and relevance to context and occupational selection. Extracted data for each theme were reviewed to ensure coherency within themes, and a thematic map was developed to ensure reflection of the data set as a whole. Themes were reviewed by the researchers and co-supervisors to ensure that they were consistent with the research objective, internally consistent, and distinct from one another. During phase V, a detailed analysis was written for each theme and themes were finalized, defined, and named.

To ensure rigour throughout the analysis process, a detailed audit trail was maintained in the form of a password-protected blog. The audit trail included reflexive memos, opinions, and a detailed overview of methods, which was shared amongst the researchers and co-supervisors. The positionality of the researchers as Canadian occupational therapy trainees analyzing the local voice was actively considered and discussed throughout the analysis. Rigor was also enhanced through regularly scheduled meetings where clarification of technique of analysis occurred amongst the researchers and co-supervisors.

3. Results

The focus of this study was on the influence of context on occupational selection in KAO programmes in Trinidad and Tobago and Zambia. Two themes were identified to understand how leaders filter a multitude of contextual factors to prepare and implement KAO programmes, resulting in the selection of varying occupations. The two themes illuminate the specific contextual considerations leaders factor into their decision when selecting these occupations. Balancing the Audience and the Self describes the leaders’ strive to balance their own activity preferences with those seen as preferential in their physical, socio-historical, and cultural contexts when selecting occupations. Sport as a Tool, a Tool for What? expresses how subtle differences in the understanding of sport as a tool for development as a result of the socio-political and cultural contexts leads to differences in occupational selection.

3.1. Balancing the Audience and the Self

When looking at KAO as a whole, leaders can be seen as a filter—they filter incoming contextual information to select a variety of occupations in one programme (see Figure 1). Across the span of interviewees, it was recognized that the leaders are the ones selecting the occupations. “I think the...specific activities, really are determined by the individual leader...” (female, Trinidad and Tobago). One leader did discuss the use of the KAO training manual as a guide for choosing occupations stating: “what we’re trying to do is provide the leaders with a pool of resources, and they decide based on the context that they’re in which one might be more appropriate for this situation” (male, Trinidad and Tobago). However, this appeared not to occur with the majority of interviewees, as when asked about whether leaders
receive training on how to select particular occupations to implement in the programmes, a common response included “um no, none of that is involved. Um I’ve been to the manual, I’ve seen the training but none of that um, is involved” (female, Zambia).

The leaders selected a multitude of occupations, which are displayed in Figure 2. Although the SFD movement is centred on sport, non-sport occupations were also selected in day-to-day KAO programming. Both cases used the same KAO guidelines to train; yet, the occupations selected for use in each country had more differences than similarities, as seen in Figure 2. The leaders based their selection of the occupations illustrated in Figure 2 on a balance between their activity preferences and consideration of various contextual factors. Personal activity preferences were dependent on what the leaders were comfortable with and skillful enough to lead. Leaders from both countries constantly tailored the programming based on what activities they felt competent in leading, “I like to focus on things that I am better at… I need to be as good in them as I think I am, before I actually integrate them into the, into my mission for KAO” (female, Trinidad and Tobago) and “The ones I enjoy the most are mainly the ones that are taught during our training. And I guess the ones that I’m also good at, that I’ve played before and coached. The ones that I’m familiar with” (female, Zambia).

Figure 2. Selected occupations.

Having personal preference for particular occupations, appeared to outweigh the desires of the participants across both cases. One leader explained this as, “Well, with my age, yes, there would be some
activities that would not suit me, but would suit the children, so I might avoid those that are really hectic for me” (female, Zambia). A few leaders did express that they selected occupations solely based on what the programme participants desired to do, and a leader in Zambia clearly expressed this: “There are no guiding principles we just go by what interests the children” (male, Zambia) as did a leader in Trinidad and Tobago:

...so we work with whatever people like to do, and then we add our approach to it... but if the people are already there, work with what they have and then introduce sport to them and in a fun way...again working with their desire (male, Trinidad and Tobago)

Some of the physical, socio-historical, and cultural contextual factors that leaders balanced with their own activity preferences when making a decision included physical location, school policies, available resources, and cultural sporting influences. For example, the sport ‘Dragon boating’ was discussed only in Trinidad and Tobago, a country situated on water. At times, school policies limited educational activity, “there was a policy that we couldn’t talk about condoms, condom use in schools...” (female, Trinidad and Tobago). One interviewee also expressed the importance of general resources on occupational selection, “...to be honest [it] all comes down to resources. So if we had the resources and the space, we would [try new sports] but otherwise, it probably wouldn’t be a reality” (female, Zambia). The cultural value of specific activities also influenced the likelihood of selection. For example, in Zambia “...the experience of playing traditional football is something here in Zambia people value this is part of our African heritage” (female, Zambia). In Trinidad and Tobago, “we’re one island, but our cultures still vary...so they will use drums and music and dance... or even boxing to spread the message about HIV and AIDS” (female, Trinidad and Tobago). In both counties, football was seen as the predominant activity, unsurprisingly, given that football was the activity namesake of the program “Kicking AIDS Out” and the cultural relevance of the sport in each country.

3.2. Sport as a Tool, a Tool for What?

Broadly, the understanding of sport as a tool for development was similar in Trinidad and Tobago and Zambia, as based on the KAO mandate to use sport to educate and prevent HIV/AIDS:

...sport-for-development is really using sport as a medium, as a tool, as a vehicle, to help develop people.... and by extension communities um by developing positive social behaviours and positive values (male, Trinidad & Tobago)

However, two different starting points for understanding SFD programming were expressed by leaders in the interviews: (I) starting with development goals in mind, and using sport occupations to achieve these goals and (II) starting with sport in mind, and achieving development goals through sport. These differences are subtle, but leaders expressed these different ideas when providing their rationales for choosing certain occupations.

In Trinidad and Tobago, there was a strong focus on using sport to spread a message about HIV/AIDS and to teach life skills. Sport was clearly expressed as secondary to the overall goal of program attendees learning various life skills, such as speaking skills. One interviewee expressed that KAO brought sport back to current life skills programming:

...here we already had a program for young people that was supposed to be sport oriented but mostly looked at speaking skills... it kind of moved away from sport um but now Kicking AIDS Out brought it back, brought that movement element ...which was a great thing (male, Trinidad and Tobago)

Another leader in Trinidad and Tobago expressed the secondary nature of sport by commenting on how the chosen activities were not as important as the attendees making life changes. “The main challenge has been, not necessarily the use of the activities, but... the sustainability of implementation um into the rest of the life of the persons in the club” (male, Trinidad and Tobago).
There was also a strong focus on spreading the message about HIV/AIDS in Trinidad and Tobago: “you will have thousands of people sharing the concept and even spreading the message of HIV and AIDS and how to prevent it and deal with issues such as stigma and discrimination” (female, Trinidad and Tobago). The focus on spreading the message influenced leaders to expand beyond sport programming to achieve the goal of educating people about HIV/AIDS and teaching life skills. Leaders integrated occupations other than sport to achieve this development goal, and used non-sport occupations like drama and music. “Drama is...an expression that you could...use to talk about HIV and AIDS” (male, Trinidad and Tobago). Similar sentiments were also discussed in Zambia; “we teach a kind of music and put in an education” (male, Zambia).

A different focus, beyond sharing the message of HIV/AIDS, was also expressed in Zambia. A leader from Zambia articulated the primacy of sport as: “So the entry point is sport. And that is why we call it Sports for Development, because they play sports before the development comes into play...” (male, Zambia). There was a stronger focus on sport occupations and the benefits of sport, such as increased teamwork skills, increased self-esteem, and potential to foster economic and social development for the participants. This focus on skill development, “like teaching [participants] to be better footballers or playing netball better” (female, Zambia), was explained:

“...we (Zambian’s) appreciate the aspect of personal and economical development through sports, firstly, it enhances social change in an economical aspect and also in the social aspect and development of the use of sport as a tool” (male, Zambia)

The development of sports skills was an economic opportunity for many attendees, where participating in these programmes could result in a sporting career. Another interviewee elaborates,

“Football becomes a powerful tool... if these young people work hard using sports they are able to feed their families because they create a career as a result of that...In Zambia the career development for example in music is not as lucrative as it is in sports” (male, Zambia)

The leaders in Zambia expanded beyond sport, but in this case, the occupational choices that were promoted included marketable skills, such as teaching information technology and use of a computer, which would make individuals attractive to future employers.

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of context on occupational selection in the two cases of KAO in Trinidad and Tobago and in Zambia. The wide scope of identified occupations (see Figure 2) reveals diversity in programme implementation, both between the two cases and within the cases themselves. The variety of occupations used illuminates the fact that despite sporting activities often being solely used in development programming based on their practicality, cost-effectiveness, or because they are seen as an alluring hook or attraction [40], the KAO leaders, particularly those in Trinidad and Tobago, selected occupations using a set of different rationales, including their cultural familiarity. In the case of Zambia where sporting occupations were prioritized for their assumed economic benefits, this practice cannot be overlooked as it is of economic benefit to only a select few, primarily athletic non-disabled boys living in urban areas and therefore may supersede the inclusion of other occupations that could potentially benefit all youth.

The results also highlight the centrality of the leader and illuminate some explicit and implicit contextual influences. Explicitly, leaders are influenced by their own competencies and activity preferences. This is consistent with Lindsey and Grattan’s (2012) point with respect to leaders in sport-for-development in Zambia having a significant role in the determination of programming [10]. However, our findings go beyond that to indicate that providing input into the form of activities used stopped at the level of staff, as youth participants were not involved in decision-making at least in the case studies examined. Jeanes (2011), in one of the few contributions in the literature to consider youth’s perspectives, identified that in order to implement interventions that achieve stated
objectives, young people’s perspectives must be included [41]. Implicitly, leaders are influenced by the greater context that the programmes are situated in, which influences the choice of activities and understanding of sport as a tool.

These results have two implications for SFD as described below (I) there needs to be further examination of the role of leaders in selecting occupations for implementation into programming, and (II) there needs to be recognition and clearer articulation of how selected occupations for SFD programming are used as a means to contribute to context-specific development goals.

4.1. Role of the Leaders in Selecting Occupations

As the results illustrate, leaders select occupations by filtering contextual factors, and are central to the implementation of the KAO programme. The result of this filtering is a multitude of different, context-specific occupations. Although KAO is a curriculum-based SFD approach [42,43], there appears to be variability and room for individual interpretation of this curriculum. On the ground and during implementation, leaders make many decisions including what occupations to include, how to deliver the programme, who they will deliver it to, and how much education versus sport they choose to include. Leaders are pivotal to the sustainability and success of SFD initiatives, with the majority of SFD initiatives utilizing volunteer peer leaders to implement programmes [12]. Despite the leaders’ centrality in SFD, little research has explored the influence of the leaders themselves in choosing activities for the programme. Through using an occupational approach, the study went beyond that of previous studies and indicated that in the cases studied, providing input about the form of activities used in sport-for-development occurred at the leader level. This finding that the choice of occupations used in programming was made by staff reinforces the idea that sport-for-development may “serve practitioners as much, if not more, than the people it is intended to serve” [8]. This finding also has implications for programme participants, as not directly involving youth in the planning could lead to disenchantment and could make some youth less likely to participate as they feel they have no choice or influence.

One of the few studies exploring the role of the leader in SFD programme implementation includes a research project aimed at building a body of best practices for SFD conducted by Coalter and Taylor [12]. In this study, six different SFD initiatives were analysed. The project revealed that the training received within programmes was not systematic, with trainees receiving different training and amounts of training, and there was substantial room for individual interpretation of the programme curriculum [12].

The results of this study are consistent with the literature in the sense that there is apparent diversity in programme implementation, and that leaders cater programming to specific preferences and local contexts. What has not been revealed in the literature is that even within one programme, such as KAO, there is substantial diversity both within and across cases. This highlights the important role that leaders play in programme delivery, and potentially indicates where training resources and further research need to be directed. If more or specific training were provided it would potentially lead to more replicable, explicit, and contextually relevant programming.

While many factors contribute to programming diversity, diversity appears to be influenced by leaders selecting contextually relevant occupations and context-specific development goals. All social interventions are “complex systems thrust amidst complex systems” [44] and SFD initiatives cannot be divorced from the greater context in which they are situated [6,44]. Diversity is inherent in SFD programme implementation as each context is unique, and programmes should consider how to best support leaders in adapting programmes to be contextually relevant.

4.2. Occupations Used to Achieve Context Specific Development Goals

Our findings suggest that broader contextual factors implicitly influenced leaders’ understanding of sport as a tool for development, which led to the selection of occupations to achieve particular complementary development goals. This implication is novel and can be attributed to the occupational
approach we adopted to carry out this study. Leaders never explicitly explained these complementary goals; however, they were illuminated through our analysis. Leaders in Trinidad and Tobago spoke of the complementary development goals of healthy living and lifestyle changes, and leaders in Zambia articulated the importance of economic development based on the specific socio-political environments. Through a summary of existing literature [45–49], Lindsey and Gratton [10] have also highlighted the role of context influencing such programming:

...authors point to the capacity of local actors to contextualize, reinterpret, resist, subvert and transform international development agendas which, in turn, contributes to a diverse array of development practices emerging within local contexts.

SFD programming can be broadly understood along a continuum of starting points, labelled by Coalter [50] as sport plus and plus sport. This conceptual framework helps to make sense of the findings, particularly how leaders frame their understanding of sport as a tool. The historical context of KAO and each country also helps us understand how sport plus and plus sport values may have emerged. On one end of the spectrum, sport plus programmes start with sport programming before going on to address broader social issues [50]. This was expressed in Zambia, where leaders predominantly selected occupations to achieve the complementary goal of economic development. This goal might be explained by Zambia’s economic history and status with the majority of the population living in poverty [20,50]. In relation to this unique finding, the study made an original contribution to the literature, which was that other occupations that could contribute to the identified development goals, such as the need for economic prosperity in Zambia were not made explicit in the programs. Specifically in Zambia, football was chosen as it could lead to the development of professional football players who could contribute economically to the family; but an occupational approach introduces the idea that professional players need coaches, therapists, and others to support them. Even though the economic rewards are higher for playing men’s football professionally, making it in the world of football could include participating in other occupations that could involve a greater diversity of occupations to be selected for incorporation into SFD programmes.

On the other end of the spectrum are plus sport programmes that focus on achieving non-sport development objectives such as gender empowerment, or HIV/AIDS intervention, while secondarily incorporating sport into programming [51]. This was expressed primarily in Trinidad and Tobago, where occupations were selected to achieve the complementary goal of promoting health behaviour change. This focus on health may be explained by the historical and continued health challenges Trinidad and Tobago experiences; particularly the recent and dramatic increase in HIV/AIDS prevalence [30].

As seen in the two cases, program implementation and occupational selection were influenced by contextually relevant goals, but these goals were not explicitly articulated by the leaders. Unarticulated development goals can lead to unclear pathways to achieve that goal and may result in differences in programme implementation. Hartmann and Kwauk [52] have discussed at length the need for SFD initiatives to better articulate development goals, and to critically analyse these goals, in order to develop a clear plan for producing optimal social change. The use of ‘sport as a tool’ for international development may be more useful and universally understood if differing context-specific and complementary development goals are clearly articulated. When articulating these goals, the SFD community ought to remain mindful of who is crafting these goals and ensure that multiple stakeholders, including the local voice, are involved.

4.3. Limitations of Study

There are certain limitations to this study resulting from conducting a secondary analysis, and the researchers’ positionality as Canadian occupational therapists. Although the research was centred on knowledge from the leaders themselves and representations of the local voice, it was analysed from a
Canadian perspective. Caution should be taken when considering these results, as it was not a direct representation of the local voice.

The original studies had similar objectives, which were to explore KAO from an occupational perspective. They were, however, carried out by different researchers and utilized context specific semi-structured interview guides, which limited the direct comparison of some constructs between the case studies in this analysis. Additionally, the original research objectives differed from this study’s objectives, therefore, some data specifically related to context and occupational selection may have been missed as the semi-structured interviews were directed towards slightly different research objectives [34]. Finally, some information was not identified by the leaders in the interviews, such as length of time involved in KAO and age, and was unable to be verified as this was a secondary analysis of anonymized data.

5. Conclusions

This study explored the role of context in the selection of occupations for use in sport-for-development programming using an occupational approach. More specifically, the research investigated how leaders of KAO choose occupations for use in sport-for-development programs in Zambia and Trinidad and Tobago. We have brought to light factors that may shape the selection of occupations in sport-for-development programs: including leaders’ strive to balance their own activity preferences with those seen as preferential in their physical, socio-historical, and cultural contexts, and differences in the understanding of sport as a tool for development as a result of the socio-political and cultural contexts. Taken together, these findings provide an essential and unique contribution for the study of occupation and sport-for-development both theoretically and practically.

The diversity of occupations identified in this study illuminates the important role that context plays in SFD programme implementation. Although this study was focused on one SFD programme (KAO), the peer-leader training model is commonly used in SFD programming. Accordingly, our results may have implications for SFD as a whole. Future research may explore how to best train leaders in the implementation of the programme; what occupations are best suited to the development goals; and how to cater these occupations to optimize the fit between the occupations, the programme and the context in which it is being implemented. Part of this includes articulating the goals of development and exploring the understanding of ‘sport as a tool’ from the perspective of local leaders.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

- MDPI: Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute
- DOAJ: Directory of open access journals
- SFD: sport-for-development
- KAO: Kicking AIDS Out

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