Envisioning the role of sport as a tool for community-level peace building in Kisumu, Kenya

by

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I just wish that peace might be something that is inherent in individuals...because of the education that they’ve got.

I think the current need is for the sports program to be structured, so that it becomes part of the school curriculum. I would like it to be something that is part of us, something that we do in a structured way.

I think one of the things I would like you to understand is that, when we are starting a program like this, it’s important to make it all-inclusive. We can involve the teachers, we can involve the kids, and it will also be important to involve the parents. I believe that if we can find a way of incorporating everyone in the community so that it’s something that is community driven, that would be really good.

David Omondi, Founder and Director of Operations, Akili Preparatory School

The first thing that I would like you to know, is that we are from different cultures. And what I know with you people, you need things to run the way you want them to run. And when it comes to Africa, I would say they [Africans] go very slow.

...As you do this, you keep on motivating each other, you keep on...when there is something wrong, you talk about it. You can keep engaging the stakeholders who are around, the teachers, etc. When we own it, it becomes very easy to implement it. The stakeholders on board just need to get engaged with everything that is happening.

When you start doing something, with very little resources, just in your mind, and then you see it growing, you know, it gives you the morale to continue venturing into that.

Sport is very important. We’ve seen sport reuniting people. It brings people together. It’s something that should be included in school and in the community.

Erick Otieno, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Akili Preparatory School
As the sport for development and peace (SDP) movement continues to gain momentum within a variety of contexts, from the international to the grassroots level, there is an increasing need to better understand how SDP organizations and programs are impacting communities at the local level. Program accountability and monitoring remain a challenge for SDP researchers and practitioners, and this study therefore sought to engage with community stakeholders on a small-scale level in order to track program development and progress in a collaborative and case-specific way. This Participatory Action Research (PAR) study sought to develop a deepened understanding of the potential role of sport in an ongoing grassroots, community-level peace building process, with the intention to explore how the community had rebuilt and evolved since a period of conflict, and where community members felt there was potential for using sport in an ongoing peace building process. The research incorporated a series of semi-structured interviews, small group discussions, and a photovoice project with youth participants. Though the program activities are early in their implementation, the findings of the project indicate that participants see possibility and potential for sport’s role in the development of their school culture and the wider community peace building process. The findings also prompted reflection on the PAR process and point to a useful model for conducting PAR studies at the grassroots, community level: following a community – case – community sequence that first seeks to understand the community context before focusing on a specific case, then broadens the research scope back to the larger community.

Keywords: sport for development and peace, peace building
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Envisioning the role of sport as a tool for community-level peace building in Kisumu, Kenya

The rising sport for peace and development (SDP) movement and the use of sport as a tool for peace building are often judged as abstract and controversial, in part due to the difficulty of defining both ‘sport’ and ‘peace’ (Wilson, 2012, p.12-13; Coalter, 2010). Sport has often been recognized within educational settings as a vehicle for supporting improved performance in the classroom, reducing anti-social tendencies, contributing to social unity, and developing character (Beutler, 2008; Camiré et al., 2011; Coalter, 2013, p.18; Laverack, 2012; Kidd, 2008). Despite these valid claims to sport’s role in character building and developing interpersonal skills, and previous research demonstrating the potential role of sport in community-level peace building (Kidd, 2008), there is relatively little research exploring how the specific values learned through sport participation can then contribute towards peace building efforts within a community. There also emerges the danger of overestimating sport’s position within development work and peace building processes (Darnell, 2010; Gilbert & Bennett, 2012, p.32). This project explores the potential role of sport in the grassroots, community-level peace building process – recognizing sport as one potential tool within a larger process, not as a sole means. Specifically, the project examines current perspectives of community members as they reflect on the rebuilding of their community following Kenya’s 2007-2008 post-election violence, and in their dialogue surrounding the development of a sports program that would reinforce values of unity and respect at Akili Preparatory School. At this stage of the research, SDP will be generally defined using Levermore’s seven classifications or intended outcomes: conflict resolution, cultural understanding, infrastructure development, educational awareness, the empowerment of marginalized groups, encouragement of physical activity and health, and driving economic
development (as cited in Darnell, 2012, p.7). This project draws from and contributes to literature from several disciplines including sociology of sport (Coalter, 2010; Darnell, 2011; Wilson, 2012), and fields of study such as peace studies (Samaddara, 2004; Webel & Galtung, 2007), sport education (Camiré et al., 2011; Camiré & Trudel, 2010), and sport for peace and development (Allen et al., 2010; Beutler, 2008; Camire & Trudel, 2010; Kidd, 2008; Laverack, 2012). Social constructivist educational theory stems from the premise that the classroom should be viewed as a community of learners, and that students therefore claim some level of ownership of the curriculum (Azzarito & Ennis, 2003, p.179). From this foundation, I examined current examples of case study research to inform my approach to facilitate dialogue and interviews that would allow participants to share their stories and ideas concerning events and activities at a very local, small-scale level. Previous research has effectively used case studies (Ataöv & Haider, 2006; Giulianotti, 2004; Spaaij, 2009), and photovoice (Wang & Burris, 2005) to explore the role of sport in the peace building process, as well as to enable participants to play a significant role in new programming or community development. Despite these studies, there remains a research gap for projects incorporating sport at the grassroots level in order to forward peace-building efforts within a community. In this case, ongoing research would require long-term monitoring of how and to what extent the values of unity and respect could be reinforced through Akili’s sports programming.

The study took place over a three-month period in the Obunga slum of Kisumu, Kenya, although the dialogue with key stakeholders began before this period and has continued since. The city of Kisumu was deeply impacted by the 2007-2008 post-election violence, which broke out following the election of President Mwai Kibaki, a member of the Kikuyu tribe. Supporters of his opponent, Raila Odinga, felt the election had been corrupted.
The resulting nationwide violence primarily surfaced between Kenya’s two dominant tribes: the Luos and Kikuyus. In Kisumu, the outbreak of violent demonstrations and killings lasted intensely for about 10 days before it was stopped by police, though the tensions continued for many months. My interviews with local community members therefore sought to explore how the community had rebuilt and evolved since that time, and where they felt there was still potential for continued progress between the tribes. I also focused my attention specifically on the lived experiences of women in the community, as Akili aims to empower girls and women living in Obunga – serving girl students and employing female teachers.

Soccer is a popular sport in Kisumu, especially among young girls, and the research explored the potential role of soccer to reinforce the values-based curriculum at Akili Preparatory School, and in turn, its potential to unite a wider segment of the local population. The purpose of this Participatory Action Research (PAR) study was to understand and explore the potential role of sport in community-level peace building, within the context of developing the Physical Education program for the 90 girls attending Akili Preparatory School. The study sought to answer the research question, how can sport be used to develop peace building programs and provide the basis for developing a values-based education program in Kisumu, Kenya? The goal of this research was to develop a deepened understanding of the potential role of sport in a community-level peace building process at the grassroots level. This goal was pursued through the collection and analysis of empirical data through interviews and focus group discussions with community members, following a literature review of current sport for development (SDP) research and commentary. Sport and PE in the Kenyan context is often blended with other extra curricular activities, so that it can
refer to soccer and running, as well as drama and poetry. At Akili, all extra-curricular activities are often lumped together on sports days.

Data was collected among students, teachers, and school founders at Akili Preparatory School in the Obunga slum during my three-month stay in Kisumu, Kenya. Officially founded in 2010, Akili is a young school and is still establishing its culture and program offerings. This early phase of its development made it rich with open idea sharing, collaborative strategic planning, inclusive dialogue between founders and teachers, and opportunities for students to share input for how they hope to build their school culture together.

This project included several unique elements, such as the ongoing engagement with a remote community of supporters in North America, Europe, and the South Pacific as well as locally in Kisumu, Kenya: over 200 donors who contributed to the construction of a new classroom block at Akili’s new school site. Through bi-weekly email updates and blog posts, I simultaneously reflected on my experiences in country and provided informative progress reports to an extended network; this process proved immensely useful in synthesizing our observations, interactions, and collaborative data collection, and was in itself a productive form of data collection.

**Literature Review**

This project primarily found its foundation from literature within the sociology of sport discipline (Coalter, 2010; Darnell, 2011; Wilson, 2012), and fields of study such as peace studies (Samāddāra, 2004; Webel & Galtung, 2007), sport education (Camiré et. al, 2011; Camiré & Trudel, 2010), and sport for peace and development (Allen et. al, 2010; Beutler, 2008; Camire & Trudel, 2010; Kidd, 2008; Laverack, 2012). The literature review
begins with a brief overview of the sociology of sport, defines sport for peace and development (SDP) within the context of this study, defines peace studies and peace building, examines the emergence of the SDP movement, notes current trends and approaches in sport for peace, notes current efforts in sport for peace in Kisumu, Kenya, and notes current opportunities in the sport for peace movement. Together, these previous and current findings form the theoretical basis for this study and substantiate the opportunity to contribute future research within the same fields of study.

The Sociology of Sport

What is the role of sociologists of sport in peace studies and peace building efforts? Perhaps their most valuable contribution toward these areas is the critical sociological perspective they can bring (Coalter, 2012; Darnell 2010, 2012; Wilson, 2012). As Wilson suggests, the use of critical theoretical lenses can contribute to addressing peace-building issues more productively (Wilson, 2012, p. 203). Specifically, sociologists of sport who examine the role of sport in conflict transformation can provide insight into how other diplomacy efforts such as NGOs and private businesses are tracking in regards to the impact of their reconciliation projects (p. 204). The sociology of sport field can also provide awareness about how sport may reinforce forms of social inequality, how perpetuation of these inequalities undermines peace-building efforts, and how cultural violence emerges (p.204). In essence, sport cannot be included in development work without first considering why those development inequalities are present (Darnell, 2012, p.53). Exploring these issues through a critical sociological lens is one way to begin to recognize the limitations and challenges facing SDP in greater peace-building efforts, as well as provide hope for how approaches to SDP can evolve and respond to the needs of a given community or issue.
Defining Sport for Development and Peace (SDP)

The UN acknowledges sport as a cultural practice that is inclusive and participatory, both for spectators and athletes, and by uniting individuals and communities, sport has the opportunity to help bridge cultural and ethnic divisions (UN Statement, 2005). It is also acknowledged to serve as a forum for learning leadership, confidence, discipline, tolerance, cooperation, and respect (as cited in Coalter, 2013, p. 19). Though these outcomes are ideals, they often become the backbone of program design in efforts to use sport as a tool within development work.

Connecting ‘sport’ and ‘peace’ can be difficult due to the various interpretations of what each of these concepts might represent. Rather, Wilson argues that we should ask, “What type of sport promotes peace?...what kind of peace does it promote?...under what circumstances is sport most likely to support peace?” (Wilson, 2012, p. 14). As mentioned in the previous section, any efforts toward fostering peace through sport must take into account the ever-looming theme of social inequality and its presence in the peace-building process. This becomes especially relevant in both the relationships between international development agencies and the local communities they are working in, as well as in using sports events to promote intercultural understanding in order to achieve some type of conflict resolution (p. 15). All too often, gender inequality becomes a barrier to progress due to the limitations placed on girls and women who might participate in such events and programs.

At the macro level, sport is typically used as a means for supporting peace-building at the community level – to “rebuild social relationships, advance reconciliation, tackle prejudices and stereotypes and teach non-violent conflict resolution, social and life skills in
programmatic interventions” (Dienes as cited in Gilbert & Bennett, 2012). In post-conflict areas, sport is often used to bring together former opponents in order to build trust and reduce the stereotypes that may have fuelled the conflict (p.45). In other words, sport is used as one tool to help combat cycles of violence and redirect behavior toward respecting other points of view. Team sports are especially common in such efforts, and on the micro level they are used in conflict transformation efforts between individuals within communities previously engaged in violent conflict (p.46). Team sports offer the opportunity to develop camaraderie within a team as well as within a larger network of participants, such as coaches, managers, parents, league organizers, and promoters.

**Peace studies and peace building**

...while peace is usually regarded as the unit concept of peace studies much in the same way as an atom defines the scope of particle physics, there has hardly been any working agreement on what constitutes its essence.
- Raṇabīra Samāḍāra, 2004, Peace Studies: An Introduction to the Concept, Scope, and Themes (p.21-22)

*Even within the new approaches to conflict transformation and peace-building which have gained prominence since the end of the Cold War, there are important deficits which must be addressed in order that this new approach to conflict transformation can lead to peace. The simple fact remains that peace processes more often fail than succeed.*
- Graf, Kramer and Nicolescou as cited in Webel & Galtung, 2007, Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies (p.125)

Peace studies is interdisciplinary, and finds its roots in the social sciences (Wilson, 2012, p. 7). Stemming from post-Cold War international cooperation and prevention efforts in the 1980s, peace studies attempts to better understand why armed conflicts occur, how to mitigate human rights violations, and how to “create and maintain more peaceful societies” (p. 7). One ongoing tension within this field of study is the difference between hierarchical top-down methods versus bottom-up approaches, and the search for how these might be more effectively connected to prevent violence.
One of the challenges in the peace-building process is that dialogue is often horizontal in nature. Agreements are arranged between leaders or decisions are made at a grassroots level without taking into account members of another vertical level (Graf, Kramer & Nicolescu, as cited in Webel & Galtung, 2007).

Different practitioners work at these different levels. And the practitioners from each level have the tendency to believe that their approach, at their level of interaction, will be the basis of peace. Those who, at the grassroots, bring youths from the different conflict parties together see these youths as the leaders of tomorrow, as the ones who will foster new nonviolent movements, and having developed a level of interdependence with their counterparts, will have the resources and relationships to bring peace. Graf, Kramer & Nicolescu, as cited in Webel & Galtung, 2007 (p.125)

The danger with this trend of hierarchical decision-making is that relationships between levels (e.g. the elite, the local authorities, and the grassroots community members) are not always built and nurtured. Rather, dialogue remains separated into silos and the authorities may be uninformed as to the reality of what is underway in a local community. This study was one small-scale effort to engage multiple stakeholders across multiple levels within a school community. Through the inclusion of founders, teachers, and students in the study, and by informing parents about the intended uses for the findings, the motive was to include participants at multiple levels within the school as well as engage stakeholders within the wider community (e.g. parents, business leaders, and community leaders).

Peace and peace building can be difficult to define due to the numerous perceptions of what constitutes peace, and how it might be realized. Peace requires an ongoing peace building and peace making effort. Peace processes involve both personal and collective engagement, “and peacemaking requires active and continual personal and collective transformation, pacifistic rather than pacifying in its means of psychological and political development” (Webel & Galtung, 2007, p.8). This multilayered transformation process made
it crucial for the community partners and me to consider both the individual and collective opportunities before, during, and after the research period, and the potential impacts of a project that would explore relationships at personal and community-wide levels.

**The United Nations, a New Social Movement, and the emergence of SDP**

In 1994, the UN declared the International Year of Sport and Olympic Ideal to celebrate 100 years since the founding of the International Olympic Committee. October 2003 marked the publication of the United Nations report entitled *Sport for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*. Since then, an increasing number of NGOs have specialized in using sport to achieve various development goals and to promote peace (Kleiner as cited in Gilbert & Bennett, 2012, p. 35). 2005 was declared the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, intended to promote sport in achieving such goals. One intention of this initiative was to increase the concept of ‘sport for all’ for governments and local authorities (p.37). In addition, this movement sought to demonstrate sport’s role within a balanced education and lifelong learning, as it has been ‘losing ground’ in formal education systems (p. 37). In 2006, the Sport for Development and Peace – International Working Group reported that governments needed to be convinced of the importance of SDP (Wilson, 2012). UN partnerships with private programs as well as NGOs have increased awareness of sport as a tool in the peace-building process during intercultural, post-conflict dialogue.

A discussion on the evolution from ‘sport development’ into ‘sport for development’ would not be complete without introducing Bruce Kidd, a social scientist and SDP scholar who has been studying trends in this field for over 20 years. Kidd has followed the rise of development organizations and programs in the areas of sports development, humanitarian...
relief, post-war reconciliation, and social development following the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a ‘neo-liberal emphasis on entrepreneurship.’ (Kidd, 2008, p. 370). Kidd explains that while development efforts through sport have a long history, over the last two decades there has been a significant effort to remobilize sport in sustainable social development as well as a focus on policy development by the United Nations. Wilson (2012) noted that 93 percent of the SDP projects on the International Platform on Sport and Development website had emerged since 2000; there are currently more than 200 projects listed (www.sportanddev.org). Where ‘sport development’ programs engage with those already participating in sports, ‘sport for development’ efforts more specifically “use sport to advance reconciliation and intercultural communication in regions of conflict (‘sport for peace’)… and contribute to the realization of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (‘sport for development’)” (p.373). Two of the sub goals of these programs are ‘social cohesion’ and ‘helping girls and women’, and these were primary focus areas within my study. Kidd argues that SDP has seen a ‘rapid explosion’ of organizations involved, but is also ‘woefully underfunded, highly uncoordinated, and completely unregulated’ (p. 371). He raises the issues of top-down leadership, the trouble with inexperienced volunteers and minimal community buy-in, and stresses the importance of intercultural sensitivity and a needs and assets based approach to development (p. 377). Kidd also warns of donor-defined agendas and the ‘missionary zeal’ that often accompany social development work, and the fact that “sector-wide coordination of planning, programmes, monitoring and evaluation is still the exception” (p. 377). Kidd’s cautions and his eye for the opportunities in this field became paramount to my own approach towards engagement with community stakeholders and participants during the study.
Though SDP is sometimes claimed to be a relatively new field or ‘movement’ (Darnell 2012; Kidd 2008), it is argued that the level of practice and implementation of certain SDP programs can also reflect a legitimacy that are based on longstanding assertions about the contributions of sport (Coalter 2013, p. 18-19). Coalter argues that while the ideology and policy concerning the SDP movement still seem in their formative stages, there are certain long accepted attributes of sport, such as ‘character-building’ capabilities, improving educational performance, and promoting social cohesion (Coalter 2007; Coalter 2013, p. 18). Calling attention to a body of research that would question some of these long-held assumptions, Coalter critiques the UN’s essentialist descriptions of sport in their 2005 statement, previously mentioned in my definition of SDP. Coalter’s views, along with Darnell and others who adopt a critical sociological perspective serve to remind scholars and practitioners alike of the importance of cultural context, underlying social inequalities, and the very context in which the term ‘development’ is used.

**Current trends, challenges, and opportunities for SDP**

*Those that explicitly follow an evidence-based logic model of development or social reconciliation and social cohesion, with appropriate community engagement, monitoring and evaluation, constitute a tiny fraction of programmes overall, and an even smaller fraction of the billions spent on development. There is an urgent need for a more careful mapping of SDP than has been previously possible.*

*If SDP is to grow and succeed, its advocates and practitioners need to distance themselves from the ‘messianic claims’ of the international documents and monitoring and evaluation by photo op and to develop rigorous, community-appropriate measures to evaluate what is actually being conducted on the ground.*

*The least understood interventions – and the greatest scope for research – are those that aim to reduce social conflict and enhance social cohesion.*

Bruce Kidd, *Cautions, Questions, and Opportunities in SDP*, 2011

As noted in the sections above, policy rhetoric and ideology referring to ‘development’ and ‘empowerment’ can be problematic because these terms are often used
vaguely (Coalter, 2013). In addition, Coalter warns of an ‘environmental determinism’ that, “assumes that deprived communities inevitably produce deficient people who can be perceived, via a deficit model, to be in need of ‘development’ through sport” (Coalter, 2013, p.3). Likewise, Darnell feels that ‘development’ is a term often used in the name of an intensely politically oriented SDP (Darnell, 2012, p.18-19), and questions the lack of ‘opponent’ to the movement, with the exception of perhaps those who are being ‘served.’ Kidd has also drawn attention to similar challenges, including the well intentioned but ill prepared volunteers and the frequent breakdowns in communication between these workers and the communities they are trying to serve (Kidd, 2008; 2011). Nonetheless, Kidd has suggested that when efforts are approached in culturally appropriate ways with community support, there is evidence that these efforts have “enhanced the education, health and well-being of participants” (Kidd, 2008, p. 376). Herein lies the impetus for this study. Kleiner writes of the difficulty of evaluating sports’ distinctive impact in peace-building, and calls for this type of monitoring to continue on a long-term basis, using both qualitative and quantitative methods (as cited in Gilbert & Bennett, 2012, p. 50). He warns against conducting such monitoring solely for the purposes of donor reporting, but rather to focus on increasing effectiveness and efficiency, and in the development of best practices.

One significant area of opportunity for the SDP movement falls within its appeal to youth, and the increasing number of NGOs and programs founded and led by youth (Kidd, 2011). Despite the challenges that may occur as a result of sending ill equipped volunteers or students to work on development projects, perhaps this trend can shift toward the positive, and ultimately inspire the youth of the local communities to take leadership of the programming themselves. Two prime examples of this within Kenya can be found in the
ongoing success of the renowned Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), now in their third decade of operation, who have mobilized local youth to implement their programming (Kidd, 2008, 2011; Wilson, 2012), and Carolina for Kibera (CFK), who have employed several of their formal youth participants on their leadership team.

The UN has gained some ground through their various campaigns, which build awareness about their efforts and their programs. As Kleiner points out, the 2005 International Year of Sport and Physical Education gave the UN the platform to promote the value of sport in achieving development and peace goals. In so doing, the perception of sport could be shifted to include the concept of ‘sport for all’ in the eyes of governments and local policy makers (as cited in Gilbert & Bennett, 2012).

**SDP efforts in Kisumu, Kenya**

The notion of using sport as a tool for peace building in Kisumu within a post-conflict context and in the reconciliation process is not a new one. Certainly in many areas of Kenya, sport has been used frequently as a means for engaging members within a given community, in building bridges across tribes, and between cities and regions. My community partners were familiar with the use of sport in peace building efforts, typically in the form of programming introduced by development workers arriving from outside the community. They were aware of several organizations and programs already in place in Kisumu, and shared that they had seen evidence that some of those programs had been effective in bringing people from differing backgrounds together and supporting a peace building process, especially following the 2007-2008 post-election violence across Kenya.

**The basis for this research**
Acknowledging the challenges of defining ‘peace’ and ‘peace building’, and upon discovering the trends of low accountability in much of ‘development’ work, the difficulties of monitoring and evaluating SDP programs, and with limited time to conduct my study – I set out to conduct my research. Having been a former volunteer in Kenya with minimal intercultural communications training or local cultural briefing, I felt better equipped in this case to exercise greater intercultural sensitivity, and had a genuine desire and commitment to listening to and facilitating dialogue that would provide insight into the needs of the community members and project stakeholders. Inspired by Kidd’s findings that there is evidence that these types of SDP efforts have benefitted participants when approached in culturally appropriate ways with community support, I sought to explore sport’s potential role in the peace building process while learning about how the slum community of Obunga had rebuilt following the 2007-2008 post-election violence. I wanted to conduct this study at the grassroots, community level to ensure that I had the best opportunity to lay the foundation for ongoing, deepening relationships with community members, and hopefully continue to further research in this area as I continue to monitor progress following this initial study period.

Research Design and Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Framework

The study draws from a combination of social theory (specifically, dialogue surrounding hegemony, or domination), as well as social constructivist educational theory, as a foundation for further contributing to research within the SDP movement (Azzarito & Ennis, 2003, p.179). I’d like to highlight two of the key theorists that influenced the framework of this study: Antonio Gramsci on hegemony and Paulo Friere on power relations
and inequalities. Antonio Gramsci’s (1971) critical concepts that empower all people as genuine intellectuals have also contributed to action research. Gramsci contrasted the “traditional intellectual,” who fulfilled a residual cultural function, with the “organic intellectual” who took up the interests of a dispossessed social group and aided in its struggle for power. Gramsci’s (1971) notion that researchers or professionals are co-learners in their interactions with people that relate to the world through their lived experiences, has direct application to PAR methodology. A critical aspect of the empowering methodology is social action (Ataöv, A., & Haider, J., 2006, p. 131).

Paulo Friere was influential in helping to define power relations and how inequalities come to exist (Friere, 1992; Wilson, 2012). Paying attention to why there is oppression of some and privileging of others is requisite in using sport as a tool in approaching social or cultural change. Regardless of their theoretical preferences, sociologists of sport tend to acknowledge that those engaging in sport, either through participation or observation, are included in the creating and re-creating of the social conditions present within a society (Wilson, 2012, p. 33). This perpetuation of certain social inequalities, or the ignorance of them, can be problematic in peace building efforts and social change programs, because it can negate or slow the progress that those programs are trying to make. By implementing a participatory action research methodology during this study, the intention was first and foremost collaboration and dialogue among participants.

Critical pedagogy acknowledges that a learner's culture shapes their identity (McLaren, 1998). From this basis, any educational practice must identify and use each learner's life experiences so that instruction is “meaningful and relevant to daily life” (McLaren, 1998). I therefore sought to reflect on my own perspective as an outsider to the
community I was working in, both before and during my data collection. Taking a Friere-influenced theoretical approach compliments my desired participatory and collaborative approach to this study, as evidenced by my intention for students to contribute to the construction of their peace building and educational programs.

My research design and framework drew particular inspiration from previous research and discussion shared by Brian Wilson, in his book *Sport & Peace: A Sociological Perspective* (Wilson, 2012). I discovered Wilson’s interest, approaches, and contributions to understanding the sport for peace and development movement among my initial explorations into this topic; his book reinforced my concept of the role of the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), and its prominent position as an exemplary organization within Kenya, and the greater SDP movement. Our meeting with the director of Carolina for Kibera (CFK) in Nairobi, who had formerly worked with MYSA, provided a helpful example of how MYSA’s program may be modified and evolved to serve another community’s need. CFK emerged as an offshoot from the original MYSA program. My partners and I discussed how similar approaches might be used in Kisumu, Obunga, and specifically at Akili Preparatory School.

**Research Design**

Participatory Action Research (PAR) uses a co-operative inquiry approach, where the participants and researcher create meaning together (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Munford, R., Sanders, J., & Andrew, A., 2003, p.97; Simonson & Bushaw, 1993). One of the underlying assumptions is that the research involves a long-term commitment – the researcher would not take information from the community without giving something or helping with something in return (p.97). The goal of PAR is to add value to the community by allowing the information
gained through the research to provide a voice for the community members. The goal can be summarized as a, “community-based analysis of social problems, and an orientation toward community action” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Within the context of SDP, as Darnell and Hayhurst (2012) have suggested, “it is hoped that decolonizing, participatory action research may provide a means through which to reinvigorate the SDP research agenda in a more positive, social charged and meaningful way.”

Inspired by Bruce Kidd’s findings that there is evidence that these types of SDP efforts have benefitted participants when approached in culturally appropriate ways with community support, we conducted this study at the grassroots, community level to ensure that we had the best opportunity to lay the foundation for ongoing, deepening relationships with community members, and hopefully continue to further research in this area as we continue to monitor progress following this initial study period. From this premise, the study sought to represent the priorities of the community, specifically its youth, through a collaborative process utilizing photovoice to envision and define peace and the peace building process. At all times, the intent of this study was to serve the community we were researching: The research sought to provide useful data that community members could use in the development of their sports program. I continually reflected on my position as an outsider, a temporary visitor to the community. My dialogue with founders and teachers sought to perpetuate the program within the realm of their design, ownership, and initiative. As much as possible, I sought to provide a venue and opportunity for the exchange of ideas, while providing minimal input or direction to the conversation. I participated in focus group discussions with founders and teachers, to the extent that I was included as one of the stakeholders during idea sharing, and offered my ideas that they could incorporate or table.
Once it was established that there was buy-in from school founders and teachers to develop the sports program, we engaged in dialogue together as we shared ideas in interviews and focus group discussions. This was a natural back and forth collaboration, as I was both serving as a partner within the community during my stay and establishing my role as a researcher and collaborator. Wherever possible, I tried to create a balance between serving as a facilitator and a partner, allowing others to lead the discussion and the direction of the dialogue as we shared ideas together.

Though Kemmis and McTaggert laid a helpful foundation for PAR research, we turned to a more contemporary research process for the steps of our project. This PAR study followed the research phases as outlined by Ataöv, A., & Haider, J. in their three year study entitled, *From participation to empowerment: Critical reflections on a participatory action research project with street children in Turkey*, published in 2006. In the opening to their research, Ataov and Haider make their case for PAR by stating that, “it is an effective way to enhance people’s ability to control their own destinies and to help them increase their capacity to do so.” There are two important elements to social action relevant to participatory research. First, rather than achieving “ideal” outcomes, [PAR] emphasizes the development of a social process that facilitates learning (Whyte 1989). Second, the effective participation of individuals in the research and planning process strengthens their sense of commitment to implement the planned decisions. In the Ataov and Haider study, the research process was composed of three phases: 1) understanding street children’s lives; 2) feedback, interpretation and reflection; and 3) action planning with children. In this study, we followed these same phases of: 1) deepening my understanding of participant’s lives, 2) collaborative feedback, interpretation, and reflection, and 3) action planning with participants.
PHASE 1: Having been a former volunteer in Kenya with minimal intercultural communications training or local cultural briefing, I felt better equipped in this case to exercise greater intercultural sensitivity, and had a genuine desire and commitment to listening to and facilitating dialogue that would provide insight into the needs of the community members and project stakeholders. I brought in my own previous experience of living and working in Kenya, and a previous understanding of the cultural context I would be working in. I also knew I had a passion for working with youth and community members at the local level. Phase 1 included initial dialogue with founders before arrival in country, to discuss the initial direction we might take the project. At their suggestion - and based on my previous experience in Kenyan culture – upon my arrival, we spent one month relationship building together with founders, teachers, and students at the school. Through our initial conversations and interviews, this first phase helped me to deepen my understanding of the current social challenges and lived experiences of girls and women within the Obunga community.

PHASE 2: Collaborative discussion(s) with school founders and teachers to determine the direction of the research, their priorities and interview/discussion process. This was a period of ongoing feedback, discussion, and collaboration. Upon identifying the five themes that emerged from initial interviews and one-on-one conversations, we gathered together to discuss ways to problem solve and creatively address some of the barriers to this project, including lack of resources and lack of expertise in facilitating sports.

PHASE 3: We involved students in the study through a photovoice project.

PHASE 3/4: This included action planning with teachers and founders. This period included further discussions with teachers and school founders, building on themes that emerged
through student photovoice project and student reflections on their photos. We brainstormed how the student themes from the photovoice project (such as family, friendships, neighbours) might be incorporated into the PE and extra curricular offerings at the school, as a way to reinforce their values-based education system (for example: school unity, teamwork, camaraderie, respect for others). The themes of the photovoice project were therefore to be reinforced through the school’s sport program. Phases three and four included forming action plans based on our discussions (such as more regular weekly sports/extra curricular days, and delegating specific teachers to leading specific activities like soccer, running, or drama, incorporating dialogue surrounding unity, teamwork, respect, and family into their soccer training) and beginning to implement those action plans. The long-term impact of this program on Akili’s culture and their interactions within the larger community remain to be seen.

Following a PAR methodology, student participants of this qualitative study used photovoice to document and define their own visions for peace. The PAR approach strives to “democratize and demystify” the research process through involving participants as equals during the study and subsequent reflection (Riecken et. al, 2005, p.1). I intended that the implementation of this approach would allow students to more authentically share their definitions for peace, and to think creatively about how they envision a peace building process. Through a series of small group walking tours through their community, students at Akili Preparatory School led the way to their homes and nearby points of interest to capture photos that represented their definition of peace. This process was intended to lay the groundwork for their participation in the creation of a pilot sports program to reinforce their peace building efforts and values-based education curriculum.
The small groups were always accompanied by at least one of the teachers, who ensured that the consent forms were translated into Kiswahili or Luo as needed, introducing the parents to me and the project as we made our way through Obunga. School founders and teachers engaged in participatory methodology through semi-structured interviews, both individually and in a series of focus group discussions. Throughout the process I noted trends in Kisumu-area development work during the time of my study, providing context for the larger efforts at work in the community. I also acknowledged some of the potential negative implications and limitations of development work in my literature review before beginning the research.

This study was made possible through my partnership with Mama Hope, a San Francisco-based NGO. During the three-month research period, I lived and worked alongside the school founders, David Omondi and Erick Otieno, to help build the Akili Preparatory School, an all girls school in the Obunga slum of Kisumu, Kenya. Students have been gathering in a local Obunga church, but will soon move out to their new campus in Obambo village, approximately 40 minutes from their current location. Their lower pre-school classes will remain in Obunga to continue to serve as the feeder classes to the new boarding school. Following Mama Hope’s model of collaboration, listening, and connecting resources to community-initiated ideas, active engagement among research participants was central to our work in Kisumu. Given the collective nature of Mama Hope’s partnerships, and our collective desire to meet the needs of the local community through dialogue and implementation of communal ideas, PAR was the appropriate methodology for this research.
Data and Data Gathering Tools

The study took place at the Akili Preparatory School in the Obunga slum of Kisumu, Kenya, from late January to late April, 2015. I recruited 20 students (this was determined by including all of the students in the oldest class, a combined grade 2-3 class, as per the guidance of the teachers and founders), four teachers, the school cook, and the two school founders for my interviews and data collection. I created two consent forms, one tailored to the students’ parents to allow them to submit their photos and quotes to the photovoice project, and one for the faculty and school founders participating in interviews. Following the initial series of semi-structured interviews with founders and teachers, the 20 students participated in a photovoice activity to gather their definitions for peace and their vision for peace through their own photos. The teachers and I worked with the class 2-3 students during a series of four workshops in order to collaborate effectively as a group. Semi-structured interviews were used in dialogue with teachers and founders to allow for emergent questions and an informal dialogue with participants. The intention was to allow space for collaboration at all stages of the study, rather than simply facilitating a question and answer interview. The student photovoice project produced 78 photos with each student reflecting on why they had captured the various scenes and subjects.

I found it notable that the stories and issues shared by faculty members and founders conveyed the same themes and parallel anecdotes, despite the fact that I first interviewed them separately. This was useful in identifying the challenges shared among the larger community – issues that represented struggles common to all I spoke with, as well as their shared hope and resilience to build a better future for the next generation. These themes were common in both formal staff interviews and informally when I attended meetings with an
Obunga women’s group. In total, 24 Obunga community members shared their stories with me. I gained consent to include 7 of these interviews (those with Akili teachers, cook, and founders) for the purposes of this study. I also conducted interviews with representatives at three NGOs working in girls’ education and sports in Kibera slums, Nairobi. These are the interviews that are formally represented in the findings of this study, though the overall themes were common among the larger sample.

I also took photos during the photovoice project data collection process, as well as photos of the teachers and founders living and working in the community. I used these pictures for both my own reflections, and to provide further context to the community of supporters who we were communicating with via social media, blog posts, and email updates. I recorded all interviews and focus group discussions using a recording device and then written transcription.

Grower and Hill argued that ethical participatory research involving youth should consider children’s preferred way of communicating, and find creative ways to allow them to express their perspectives (as cited in Warming, 2006, p. 31). For this reason, I used photovoice as a technique for allowing students to share their experiences and perceptions of what peace means to them and what peace might look like in their community. Photovoice is a process by which participants use technology to create knowledge for the purpose of representing and improving their community (Wang & Burris, 2005, p.369). I worked with the class 2-3 students during a series of four workshops in order to collaborate effectively as a group. Workshops began with sharing the project and explaining what photovoice is to the participants (their teachers assisted in translating instructions into Kiswahili and Luo as necessary). Students then shared and explained their photos in their classroom.
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photovoice project was thus a two-step process: debriefing the photovoice data with the students, and then engaging teachers and school founders in a reflection process facilitated through subsequent group discussions. Students captured snapshots of their peers, parents, extended family, neighbours, community members, livestock, and activities using a digital camera. The simplicity of this method allowed students room for interpretation of the activity guidelines, creative license and ownership of their photo choices, and flexibility to record still photos in a variety of spaces in their community. The workshops among students and teachers were as follows:

- **Workshop 1:** Introduction to the project and expectations for collaboration. Established some questions for students based on previous dialogue with Akili teachers and founders. The teachers were instrumental in facilitating this process, translating instructions in each of the small groups of students as we walked through the community, and providing clarification along the way.

- **Workshop 2:** Shared photos in the classroom and allowed students to share why they chose their subjects and scenes.

- **Workshop 3:** Identified emerging themes with teachers and founders.

- **Workshops 4-5:** Continued to de brief the project with teachers and founders in ongoing dialogue about the development of the sports program.

It should be noted that this project included several unique elements, such as the ongoing engagement with a remote community of supporters who contributed to the construction project at Akili’s new school site. For the three months before my departure to Kisumu, I was actively fundraising to support the construction of a new school building in Obambo.
village, some 40 minutes drive from Obunga, where the Akili students had been meeting in a church.

**Method of Analysis**

Following a PAR methodology and seeking to engage participants at each stage of the research, my goal was to take a collaborative approach to data analysis. I created a working document with my own reflections following the initial semi-structured interviews conducted with teachers and school founders, based on responses received. Together, we identified notable recurring themes within these interviews. Using the definitions and visions students brought forward through their photography during workshops 2 and 3, dialogue among teachers and founders incorporated the students’ emerging peace-building concepts into their sports curriculum during later workshops. This created a period of collaborative analysis. During the sports days at the end of the term, the ideas shared during these discussion sessions were then implemented in the form of games, exercises, team building, and other activities within the developing sports program. Initially, I had hoped that students would present their photovoice collections to teachers and school founders, and then teachers and founders would engage in several subsequent discussion groups to brainstorm ongoing ways to implement sports programming and extra curricular activity curriculum that reinforced the peace building concepts presented by the students. In so doing, the teachers and founders would also be able to discuss how they would reinforce their values-based education model, in which they incorporate themes of school unity, respect, and various Christian teachings through their songs, games, and activities. The students did not feel comfortable presenting in front of a larger group, and instead explained their photos to their teacher, who translated and recorded their explanations for me. Acknowledging cautions presented by Holland et al.
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(2010) regarding limitations to including children’s ‘voice’ through participatory methods, my motive was to push beyond theoretical “agency” to meaningful collaboration. In other words, to support the students in an ongoing opportunity to be part of developing their own sports curriculum (Wang & Burris, 2005) based on the themes they identified through their photos, as well as through sharing their ideas for how they envision peace within their community.

**Results**

During the first month of this study, I focused my attention on relationship building with the school founders and teachers, and spent time getting to know the oldest class of students who would participate in the photovoice project. Based on my position as an outsider, I knew I needed to first develop an understanding of the current social, political, and economic context within the community before we could begin discussing the potential for a new program. I wanted to understand how the community had rebuilt and progressed following the 2007-2008 post-election violence, and incorporate those peace-building steps (or barriers) to springboard the conversation about the program. My initial conversations with local community members therefore led me to develop a three-step process: community → case → community, by which I sought to first understand the larger community cultural context, then focus in on a very specific case (a girls’ school PE program), and then eventually turn our focus outward to see where that program might impact the wider community. The third step would take much more time to research. I hoped to begin the initial dialogue among teachers and students while I was in country, with the intent to revisit their program in the coming months and years.
For me, the key findings include deepened insight into the PAR process. I found I better grasped the importance of first understanding the wider community context (cultural context and local customs, history, attitudes) before discussing any case-specific details and issues. These first two steps were accomplished while I was in country, and the third phase, ongoing program implementation and wider community outreach, remain to be monitored and evaluated by my community partners. I also discovered the long-term potential of this study, such as increasing the number of participants as Akili’s efforts and programs expand to include the greater community. This will be especially relevant as they move into their new boarding school space and have the opportunity to expand their sports program offerings.

Initially, I had hoped to run weekly workshops and discussion sessions with teachers and founders, some of which would include students, over a six-week period. Several factors forced me to shift this schedule slightly: the need for teachers and students to review for final exams, the impending Easter holidays towards the end of my study, and activities naturally taking longer than anticipated to organize. These scheduling changes reinforce the importance of taking time to understand and work within a specific community context before moving ahead with a research plan. We were able to accomplish the discussions and workshop sessions we had planned, but they took a modified form and occurred over a more extensive timeframe. This impacted both the intent and the conduct of the study; rather than seek to develop and implement the programming before completing the study period my research became the first step in an ongoing series of dialogue among teachers and school founders in the process of developing and implementing their sports program. The reality was that the study did not fit into a tidy six week timeframe – it was much more fluid and
flexible. Due to the school’s exam period and the beginning of the holidays, we conducted interviews and held sports days when it was logical to do so rather than based on a fixed timeline. The founders and I also had to take certain days for monitoring progress at the construction site and at the farm, and couldn’t always be at the school to meet with teachers and students. Initially, my research design had included plans for implementing a sports program that we could have collaborated on together while I was still in country, and the reality was that my time in the community was too short to allow for me to be part of the regular implementation of programming. I incorporated this methodological change in my study through continuing communication with the school founders and teachers after returning home, and have included the most current status of the program in the conclusion of this study. As much as possible towards the end of my research period, I tried to allow my role to shift from instigating dialogue and workshops to facilitating them with a listening role rather than sharing ideas for program implementation. Though I am an ongoing partner and supporter in the process, the program design and implementation will ultimately follow the school’s timeline, rather than my timeline as a researcher. The fluidity of this timeline impacted my design as a researcher because it provided a much more long-term commitment to ongoing monitoring, not just in terms of the implementation, but also the planning stages for the program design. While we are able to discuss my findings to date, it is with the caveat that much more research is needed to fully meet the original study objectives.

My study began with two initial briefing workshops with the founders and then the teachers to share about my project, and to explain how we would collaborate in the research. Together we formed a plan for the subsequent weeks. From the beginning of the study, I maintained a bi-weekly blog with reflections, project updates, and community observations.
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This became a key component of my research and proved instrumental during the data analysis process, as the blog served as an outlet for my own reflections, and provided a useful chronological summary of our study.

Data collection took place during the following timeline:

**October:** I was accepted into Mama Hope’s Global Advocate Fellowship program, and was introduced to the Akili school founders, beginning our dialogue together. I began my research design and proposal.

**November- January:** Established more regular contact with Akili’s founders, inquiring about their willingness to participate and collaborate in my project, along with their staff and students.

**January 27:** Initial meeting with school founders to brief them more fully on my project. As my intention was to first and foremost allow my research to become of service to the school and the larger community, this piece was vital. Though the teachers and founders had agreed to participate in my study before I began, and had all said they would help me with my project and support my work with the students, this initial month laid the foundation for their willingness to share during interviews, the camaraderie we built while doing the photovoice piece with students, and I feel contributed to their increasing willingness to share ideas during group discussions. Following the initial meeting with the founders, I therefore took the next month to focus on relationship building with teachers and students at the school, observing their classroom dynamics and existing culture, and forming a plan for how my proposed study might fit with their schedule and current model. During this period, I also spent a significant amount of time at the construction site for their new school building,
observing how developing their sports program might contribute to their engagement with other schools in the new area (a village setting about 40 minutes outside of town).

**February 27:** Initial project briefing meeting with teachers

**March 3:** Interviews with two of the teachers

**March 13:** Interviews with two of the teachers and the school cook

**March 18:** Interview with one of the school founders

**March 19:** Interview with the other school founder

**Week of March 16-20:** First workshop with the students, introducing the photovoice project and the purpose of their role in the study. Went with all class 2 and 3 students (accompanied by a teacher for translation purposes) to all homes to gain parental consent to participate in the project, including a total of 20 students in the project. We also gathered photos for photovoice project during this week.

**March 20:** Student workshop – each student explained why they had taken their series of photos – how it captured their definitions and or visions for peace in their community.

**March 20:** Second discussion with all teachers to brainstorm initial ideas and debrief the student photovoice project. They requested to have this meeting separately from the founders, as they felt it would allow them to speak more candidly about their current program.

**March 21-24:** Traveled to Nairobi with school founders. Attended an interschool sports day with students and teachers at a school I’d previously worked at. Noted observations and best practices. Met with founders and representatives of three NGOS in Kibera slum (Carolina for Kibera, Shining Hope for Communities, and Kibera Girls Soccer Academy) that are working to educate and empower girls, each incorporating sports in their program offerings to
promote engagement with classroom curriculum and leadership training. Together with school founders, maintained an ongoing dialogue with these new partners following these meetings.

**March 27:** Third workshop – teachers and founders together. Continued to brainstorm sports program ideas and debrief the student photovoice project. Identified interest areas and created an initial plan for sports days.

**Week of March 30-April 3:** Final week of the term. Launched sports program with a series of sports days including all teachers and students. I also observed activities and teacher roles.

**April 2:** Final formal workshop with teachers and founders – debriefed where the program currently stands, shared ideas for moving forward.

**April-May:** Continued to monitor sports program following the Easter holidays, maintained communications with teachers and founders for progress updates on ongoing sports days.

**Week of May 11-15:** Follow-up discussions with David and Erick (remotely), gathering updates on how the sports program is continuing and evolving into the new school term. I conducted a brief follow-up with two of the teachers at the school about how they are incorporating the sport into their teaching schedule.

I found it notable that the stories and issues shared by faculty members and founders conveyed the same themes and parallel anecdotes, despite the fact that I first interviewed them separately. This was useful in identifying the challenges shared among the larger community – issues that represented struggles common to all I spoke with, as well as their shared hope and resilience to build a better future for the next generation. These themes were common in both formal staff interviews and informally when I attended meetings with an Obunga women’s group. These themes were also shared across genders – though I
acknowledge the founders’ somewhat unique position as men who so strongly advocate for and actively work on behalf of the girls and women in their community. Five key themes emerged across all interviews with teachers and founders:

**Obunga recovering from the post-election violence in 2007-2008**

*I think the community is making progress...people are trying really hard to bring back peace.*  
- Annette Achieng, Akili teacher

*It was terrible, we couldn’t go to school, we couldn’t find food, water. It was war all over. People died. Others migrated to their places. Some people were displaced. It was terrible.*

*From that time there are many changes...right now several tribes are back to Kisumu. Those who migrated to their places are back. The supermarkets that were burned have been built...these days, we have sports. People from different tribes join together during sports days. People come from different counties - they join together, play together, schools and community clubs.*  
- Nancy Nyaoke, Akili teacher

*Most of the people were working for the Kikuyus, they lost their jobs. The Luos looted their belongings. Some of my relatives were living in Nakuru, Naivasha...during those days they were told to go to their places. If you don’t go, you’ll be killed. They left all their property and just came with their kids. They are still here.*  
- Maureen Akoth, Akili cook

The teachers and founders spoke of the peace building process in Obunga and Kisumu as a long-term, ongoing journey. Some of them mentioned the previous presence of various NGOs utilizing sports in Kisumu as a tool for peace building. One noteworthy step of progress was when a participant shared that she saw evidence of peace building through the increase in intermarriage between the Luo and other tribes. In general, the participants felt that there had been a significant amount of progress within the community since the post-election violence, but that there was still plenty room for further reconciliation between the tribes. There was peace and ‘business and usual’ when it was not election time, but an underlying tension that violence could resurface. Akili itself stands as a venue for dialogue between members of multiple tribes, and the teachers and founders are aware of the potential for Akili to maintain a culture that is inclusive and promotes unity.
Significant current social challenges exist for women in Obunga

[For] most girls, I think their parents are not able to raise the funds to take them to school, so they get a lot of time to idle around...and you know, a challenge to a girl when you get idling around, you end up mostly in prostitution, and messing [up] your life. There is a place here where it is believed there is a lot of prostitution at night. - Annette Achieng, Akili teacher

Obunga is a place where they brew the cultural brews [the alcohols]. So many people get drunk. You just pass by, they start abusing you, they talk bad about you and you've done nothing wrong to them.

Women in Obunga are jobless, most of them are single parents...they have to work hard and look for a life for their kids. Some go and do fish mongering, some of them brew, and the girls find hard times. If the girls don’t eat at school they may stay hungry until night. Getting water is a problem. We need many things: water, shelter, clothing, food. All the basic needs. - Nancy Nyaoko, Akili teacher

Each of the teachers and school founders shared the challenges faced by girls and women living in Obunga, and their descriptions were remarkably similar. They attributed their ongoing difficulties to lack of education among men and women, the high unemployment rate among young men and the subsequent ‘idleness’ they exhibited – leading to theft, alcoholism, and added pressure on single women to serve as the primary breadwinners as well as raising children. Multiple participants referred to the high prostitution rates among young women who had no other form of income. Safety within the community, especially at night, was a concern among all the female teachers.

Many of the issues raised by the teachers and founders were mirrored in the data collected during the student photovoice project. The students captured photos that reinforced the challenges shared by the teachers, as well as the hopeful attitude they had for what peace might look like in their community. The following statements are a sample from five of the students as they described their photos:

My home is peaceful. We don’t have domestic violence.

Different people come to buy things from our shop which promotes peace.
The drunkards coming together to share local brew promotes peace.

My neighbours bring peace and joy to me when my parents are not around.

[This picture is of] people building a house peacefully. They don’t fight when working.

Almost all of the 20 student participants made reference to their mother, grandmother, or another female figure in their life. A couple of the girls mentioned their relationships with their father. Family was the focal centerpiece, as well as the important role of neighbors who looked after them. A common thread shared among the girls struck me: respect and appreciation for their mothers, and their mothers as representative of sources of peace in their lives. In both home and school life, it seemed, they were looking to women as a source of inspiration, leadership, peace, and role modeling – not necessarily groundbreaking in its own right, but certainly encouraging in the context of what Akili is trying to accomplish for the girls and women in the community – and what it may offer in support of the women who are raising the students. The girls are fed each day, and through a sponsorship program are provided with free education. Akili is poised to not only lessen the burden on Obunga’s single mothers through supporting their children’s basic needs, but in empowering their daughters through cultivating a culture of leadership, practical skills training, unity, and quality education.

Lack of resources available for women, and for the school

We have few schools, and the population is high. So we have many kids in one school, and in private schools the fees are high, so the other kids just stay at home. - Lilian Wangalwa, Akili teacher
There was a shared awareness among teachers and founders that Akili’s challenges tend to stem from a lack of financial resources – in terms of their future expansion to include higher grade levels, further expansion of their infrastructure, their capacity to serve more girls living in Obunga, and their ability to offer quality programming to supplement the Kenyan curriculum. The teachers and founders all shared that due to the social challenges faced by community members, they felt that girls and women especially were at a disadvantage to breaking cycles of poverty. Without equal education opportunities for many girls, inability for parents to cover school fees, and other obstacles to staying in school, there was a greater chance for young boys to access education. This very challenge is what Akili hopes to help reduce – and teachers and founders alike have seen evidence of Akili’s positive role in the community and are hopeful for Akili’s potential to educate and empower girls and a female faculty, to eventually gain the resources needed for sustainable expansion, and to promote peace within the greater community.

**Current barriers to progressing with the sport program**

*The biggest challenge is that we don’t have enough facilities. We have one or two balls and over 70 girls. Some girls don’t have games kits.* - Jacinta Aque, Akili teacher

While all teachers and founders shared their willingness to help and contribute to developing Akili’s sports program, both in their individual interviews and within group discussions, at this stage they tended to feel that they were unequipped to execute the programming. This could be due to a number of factors: lack of sports equipment available to them, a sense that they didn’t know what activities to lead or how to best lead them, but perhaps most important of all, that they didn’t feel they could take the time out of teaching the required curriculum to run sports programming. Their current schedule included one ‘sports day’ each week when the students all wore their games kits to school, but this wasn’t
happening on a regular basis. The teachers and founders acknowledged that they would have much more time for sports and other extra curricular activities when they move to their new school location later in the year. Akili will become a boarding school and the students will have open time to pursue sports after the regular school day.

**Hopeful attitude for Akili’s potential within the community; willingness to participate in creating Akili’s culture; developing a sports program that would cultivate a culture of peace in the school**

The sports are a good thing...because in Obunga we have different communities, so when different schools are coming to play with us, the girls will make new friends with the others, and that is one of the ways of promoting peace. - Lilian Wangalwa, Akili teacher

The role of Akili is to empower the women, and the young girls. If a girl comes from home where they can’t afford school fees, they don’t have food, clothes, at least they can get a meal in a day in school. Even if they don’t eat at home they have hope, tomorrow if I go to school I can get something. Akili has empowered me so much. - Nancy Nyaoke, Akili teacher

Sport is one of the best ways to bring people together. At Akili we can invite some girls from a nearby school. During that, the girls will talk about some of the issues affecting them. And through that, you can hear what is affecting a child through another child. And during games, the girls can talk and improve their languages. - Jacinta Aque, Akili teacher

Despite the social challenges faced by community members living in Obunga, and the challenges specific to girls and women, the overarching theme during my interviews was one of hope and enthusiasm for Akili’s potential – both regarding the potential for their sports program to foster peace building, reiterating school values in the creation of their school culture, as well as their peaceful presence within the community at large. The teachers felt that interscholastic sports competitions would be a useful way to promote school pride, for the girls to gain confidence in themselves and their peers, and to open dialogue among teachers and students of other schools in the region.

Though they didn’t always come forward with suggestions for how they might use sport as an avenue for creating peace within their own school culture, the teachers did discuss
the potential role they felt sport could play in establishing peaceful relations among different tribes and villages through interschool sports competitions. They saw the potential for camaraderie at the student and faculty levels, and were enthusiastic about the dialogue that could emerge between Akili and other local and regional schools.

Discussion

Through KGSA [Kibera Girls Soccer Academy] I have identified soccer as one of the best tools in developing skills that are required for a successful person. For very many years I stayed indoors without knowing different villages in Kibera and other regions in Kenya... We related the skills learned in soccer with the real life situation. [We] also learned to relate with other people in different areas that we visited for soccer activities. Usually after soccer training I would always forget the challenges that I face and become more focused on life. I would always set my goals just as the ones that we used to set while going for soccer matches. - Claris Akinyi, former KGSA youth participant & current teacher at KGSA, Nairobi, Kenya

Each of the participants I spoke with in Obunga, as well as the NGO representatives I interviewed in Nairobi, felt that there was value in including sport in the peace building process. Those working in Kibera slums shared their firsthand experiences as former participants in sports and education programs and described the role they felt sport had played in the reconciliation process between tribes following the 2007-2008 post-election violence. In Obunga, the participants shared that they were familiar with groups that incorporated sport into local peace building efforts, and saw its potential within the Akili context. Their favorable attitude toward the potential role sport might have in developing their school culture and their outreach within the community was a reassuring basis for conducting this research and continuing the dialogue afterwards.

In many ways, I see the five key themes listed in the results section as a roadmap for understanding why Akili was founded in the first place, as well as the potential for where Akili might go as their student body expands and the faculty continues to grow.
Acknowledging the tumultuous nature of Obunga’s fairly recent history, and referring often to the ongoing social challenges for girls and women living in Obunga, there is a compelling impetus for Akili’s role within their greater community. The staff has identified what they feel are the current barriers to the development of their sports program (i.e. lack of resources available, lack of expertise in various sport and extra curricular activities, limited time to cover required curriculum and carry out sports activities, etc.), and yet they all shared their willingness to contribute to the development of the sports program, as well as unanimous optimism that developing that program further could be beneficial in promoting peace within their school and the larger community. In short, I feel that by periodically reflecting on their original motives for operating a school for girls and employing female teachers, the teachers and founders will continue to find solutions and opportunities to develop the sports program that fits their goals of unity and respect within their school culture, and what they hope to contribute to the larger community. They are already doing this – I witnessed evidence of the founders continually referencing the why of their work, and setting goals to achieve their vision. Each of the key themes identified in my findings provide insight into some of the general implications of SDP work, as well as the implications of various social issues on the development of SDP programming in the area I was working.

**Obunga recovering from the post-election violence in 2007-2008**

The people of Obunga, and greater Kisumu, were greatly impacted by the post-election violence. Community members were displaced, many lost their loved ones during the conflict, and businesses had to rebuild and recover following damage and loss. This recovery process has been ongoing ever since, both in the physical rebuilding of parts of the city as well as the emotional and social rebuilding that has taken place among families,
neighbors, and communities. Nearly a decade later, those I interviewed remembered the events of the conflict vividly, and though they felt there had been progress towards peace, there was still an acknowledgement that things might turn violent again if another similar election occurs.

The slow but persistent journey towards reconciliation and peace building demonstrated to me the resilience and commitment of the community members as they continued on with their lives following a period of chaos and conflict in their city and country. This indefinite process also points to an ongoing niche for preventative programming or curriculum that would reinforce unity among members of differing tribes. As was evidenced in the reconciliation process among members of the soccer clubs at Carolina for Kibera (CFK) following the post-election violence, having the programs established before the outbreak was seen as instrumental in bringing people together again more quickly after the divisive elections. I could see a similar role for SDP programs in Kisumu, and within the Akili school context. If community members are bonded at multiple levels across tribal lines (perhaps through intermarriage, women’s groups, and in the workplace), I could see the potential for sports programming to provide a further avenue to compliment the relationships that community members already form with members of other tribes. SDP practitioners and educators might begin to look more closely for opportunities for preventative programming in addition to their reconciliation efforts.

**Significant current social challenges exist for women in Obunga**

No SDP program would be effective in its efforts without considering and addressing some of the greater social challenges present in a given community. Perhaps these challenges were the root of some of the conflict in the first place, or perhaps they provide an ongoing
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barrier to the development of SDP programming. In Obunga, I might have spent an entire study simply examining and exploring the social challenges raised in interviews by the women in the community. These issues were reiterated in my interviews with the Akili founders (both men). The social challenges that emerged in conversation were significant: girls and women often felt lost and without opportunity to change their situations. Though this was also true for many of the young men in the community, there seemed to be a perception that there were substantially fewer options for girls to receive education and for women to earn income.

The challenges raised by women indicated to me the importance of taking a much more holistic view of a community before narrowing down to a programming plan. Though my study and the Akili sports program are very much a grassroots, context-specific effort, there is a larger lesson for researchers and practitioners to tread lightly as they enter a community and propose an agenda for research or programming. The emergence of this theme was perhaps the most difficult for me as a researcher, because it shed light on underlying issues within the community that underscored the impetus for my research, but I knew my study would not provide direct answers for the issues shared. As an educated female, I was especially aware of the educational opportunities that often felt out of reach for local girls and women. Akili exists to try to alleviate and reverse the inequality of access to education for girls in Obunga, and from that basis, my study can build on the new opportunities being offered to girls in the community. The mothers I spoke to all desired for their children to be educated, as they saw education as the key ingredient in lifting oneself out of poverty. I began to see how my study couldn’t specifically address lack of education or job opportunities in Kisumu, but in partnership with Akili, an established effort to alleviate
those issues, my research and support for SDP programming might reinforce efforts already underway. In essence, the implication here is that SDP programming is more likely to be effective and adopted by community members when it compliments existing local efforts.

**Lack of resources available for women, and for the school**

As with the need to examine current social challenges present in the community, I also discovered the importance of understanding Akili’s financial and human resources before moving forward with research and dialogue surrounding the development of new programming. During my time in the community, the founders were focused on the expansion of crop output on their sustainable farm as a means for generating income and food for their school lunch program. They were undertaking significant infrastructural projects, such as the construction of a poultry enclosure and acquiring 60+ chickens. In addition, they were supporting and monitoring the construction of a new classroom block at their new campus site, a time and energy intensive endeavor spanning the duration of my study. It often felt that both human and financial resources were stretched in multiple directions. Despite this, the founders were eager for me to engage in dialogue surrounding the development of their sports program, and made time for our interviews and focus group discussions. The implication of the somewhat unpredictable schedules for several of the key stakeholders, and myself as the researcher was that the study required a great deal of flexibility and an expanded timeline for possible program development and implementation. SDP researchers, practitioners, and educators might be most successful in their efforts if they first understood the larger context of project lists and timeframe for their community partners and stakeholders, and paused in their own agenda before taking the time to witness other simultaneous projects. I had known that my time in Obunga would be shared between the
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school, the construction site, the farm, and specific tasks within my research, but there was
tremendous value in taking a full month before commencing formal research to observe and
participate in the daily activities of the founders and other community members.

**Current barriers to progressing with the sport program**

I repeatedly found myself listening to the teachers sharing obstacles to moving
forward with the development of the sports program. The pressure they felt to focus on
academic curriculum in the classroom rather than take time for extra curricular activities and
PE implied that their teaching styles were embedded within a system they had been taught to
perpetuate. Though the school founders were very open to taking more time for PE and other
extra curricular activities (they were especially inspired after our meeting with the head
teacher at SHOFCO, a girls school in Kibera slum that has incorporated a North American
curriculum and approach in addition to the Kenyan curriculum), there was a shift that needed
to happen for the teachers to be willing to spend more time outside of the classroom. The
teachers also raised the issue of not having enough equipment to implement PE programming
effectively.

Over time, we began to see how the program development process was more about
shifting thought and gently introducing new ideas within the group than anything else.
Certainly, access to more equipment would be useful and appreciated, but it didn’t seem to
be the ultimate barrier to moving forward with PE programming. Rather, ensuring that the
teachers felt they had been given creative license to take the program in the direction they
wanted, that they had time and space to develop and implement their ideas, was paramount.
There was a shift from ‘this is how it’s always been done’ to ‘let’s try something new’ and
we could see how this collaborative, patient approach would be useful in a variety of research
and educational contexts. The study became less about creating a tidy set of results to discuss, and more about an opportunity for gradual, ongoing mutual learning and support.

**Hopeful attitude for Akili’s potential within the community; willingness to participate in creating Akili’s culture; developing a sports program that would cultivate a culture of peace in the school**

During the research period, I was most encouraged by the attitude of hope I witnessed among project stakeholders and other community members. There was a commitment to working towards peace in the community, and a commitment to striving toward a peaceful culture that would benefit future generations. The lesson for me in this theme of hope and openness to dialogue surrounding new sports programming at Akili was the importance of stakeholder trust in the possibility of creating something useful and effective together. Beyond mere buy-in and agreement to engage in dialogue, I found there was a genuine interest in exploring how the school might use sport as a tool for reinforcing the culture they are working to create, and foster peace among students and within the wider community. This theme was important in our work, because it transcended some of the barriers and perceived limitations that emerged in interviews with teachers. While they might not feel they have all the resources (time, finances, expertise) to fully implement their programming immediately, their hopeful attitude regarding what Akili might become opened the door for ongoing program development and continued monitoring. When teachers and founders shared their visions for what Akili’s role might be in the community, they did not hold back in their ambitious dreams. To learn of these grand ideas from teachers and founders alike gave me confidence that they will actively engage in programming to enrich their current curriculum offerings, despite the limited resources some of them feel they currently have. I see this as an important area of reflection for a researcher – to take stock of the issues
surrounding a given community, to acknowledge and address barriers to program implementation where possible, but to also identify and utilize instances of collective hope and potential as shared by project stakeholders in order to build and cultivate momentum within a project or program development. The following are samples of feedback from project collaborators – new ‘understandings’ that emerged:

“Working with you was awesome. You really opened our eyes to realize that in our quest to provide quality education for our girls, we should not just focus in the classroom, but use sports too as a tool to train and mentor our girls. I loved seeing the teachers and girls play together, forgetting all the teacher-student relationships they have in the classroom, and embracing partnership in the field, playing as a team, celebrating wins together and consoling each other in defeat, and above all promoting peace in the community.”

“Yes, it was a collaboration. People in the community are starting to embrace sports as a tool for promoting peace. There are several teams in the community for different age groups like under 10, 12, 15, 18 and so on. Peace is promoted when different teams play in friendly matches and also tournaments. Many parents sometimes fight for limited resources in the community at places of work like the fish market, but their children play with each other and become friends despite their parents differences, creating a peaceful/cohesive generation in the community.”

**Implications of this research**

As stated in my introduction and literature review, one of the primary goals of my research was to conduct a study that would allow for collaboration with participants as we identified various needs and opportunities specific to their community. For this reason, I followed a PAR methodology, and sought to simply provide a venue for dialogue as much as possible, rather than being the one to lead discussions or take the lead on how the program might move forward. We knew that stakeholder buy-in was crucial and felt the best way to ensure it was to invite and encourage space for collaborative dialogue to take place. In addition, though I acknowledge that youth participation is not always more enabling or empowering, I did feel that all potential stakeholders should be included in some way, and we wanted the students to play an active role in the development of their new extra curricular
programming. There is evidence that participatory research, “can make a central contribution, in providing an epistemological and political framework, and in the potential for ‘rich’ findings” (Hillman, Holland, Renold & Ross, 2010, p.360-361). Indeed, the contributions of the students reinforced the themes raised by the teachers and founders in their interviews; the students’ statements reiterated the adults’ descriptions of lived experiences within the community and their photos provided visual insight into their challenges as well as places of comfort and peace. Akili is entering a new phase as it moves its older students to a boarding school facility in Obambo village, and is therefore at a significant junction in the development of its culture and what will set it apart in the new community as a private boarding school.

The participatory nature of this study also includes implications for future SDP programming and research. Despite the limited time I had to complete my study, I do feel that in order to create or further develop any type of sustainable program, that program must be co-created. Right from the very beginning, I made it clear to the founders and teachers that while I hoped to gain a better understanding about their community, Akili’s role in the community, and to hear their ideas, the sports program would not be mine to develop or execute. Any continued progress would need to be instigated by them, and while we could maintain an ongoing relationship (and we have), the majority (if not all) of the support required to facilitate the program would need to be locally sourced. I feel that the next steps within my own research would be a period of observation to see how the local stakeholders engage with the information gathered thus far, and to note how they focus their efforts within the school culture and programming, and how their efforts expand outward into the community. In essence, to observe how their natural process does or does not follow a
community à case à community model without my presence, and to what extent it does or does not. Together in discussion sessions, and individually in their interviews, the teachers and founders identified the challenges in their community, and reflected on progress made following the post-election violence and more recently through Akili’s activities. They also reflected on case-specific issues in evaluating where Akili’s current challenges lie and where they see potential for its growth and development. All participants made the connection between Akili and its potential outreach to the greater community. I feel the validity of this study, and for others who follow a PAR approach, lies in the extent to which the dialogue continues without the researcher’s agenda – spearheaded by the stakeholders who possess true agency. Conversely, undertaking this type of research implies a certain level of commitment to truly striving to understand another community, and building trust through developing relationships with participants. While the goal is to be able to step out of the program development process, I believe researchers engaging in this type of study must establish a balance between remaining committed to the project, and not becoming an overbearing presence in the process. I do feel an obligation to continue to monitor this program development, and I attribute this to the investment a researcher must make to engage in such collaborative research process. From the outset, my role in the community was established just as much as a ‘partner’ as it was ‘researcher’, and while I think this greatly assisted in our relationship and trust building process (which in turn benefitted the interviews and data collection), it also means that I was invested in developing bonds and friendships within the community that motivate me to continue to collaborate them as a partner.
Conclusion

The findings of this study provide insight into the need for SDP researchers, practitioners, and educators to explore and understand the context of a given community prior to and during their research and practice. To be developed and implemented effectively, my study demonstrates that SDP first and foremost requires partnership and collaboration. The subsequent programming and its impact should be secondary to establishing long-term relationships and a means for conducting ongoing monitoring. Based on the process and findings of this project, I propose a community à case à community model for undertaking research and work in the SDP field. To be conducted responsibly, I feel research should seek to understand the wider community context before narrowing its focus on a specific case study. Returning the focus back out to the larger community following each step of the process allows for reflection on how even the most localized, grassroots effort may impact the wider community and its stakeholders and members. The extent to which this model could be carried out effectively would be determined based on the allotted timeline for a study and the willingness to commit to ongoing monitoring and dialogue. I acknowledge that my findings are based on the initial steps of this new program, and not conclusive in terms of evaluating the ongoing impact of the program. Ultimately, my goal and the goal of many who support program implementation is to be able to step back and witness a program’s sustainability without external stakeholders. The foundation must therefore be an impetus that stems from within a community and its stakeholders, perhaps with external encouragement and collaboration where appropriate.

The study illuminated a series of themes common to interview participants that provided a backdrop to the development of the sports program.
the 2007-2008 post-election violence plays a role in the current attitude of Obunga’s community members; I noted that women in particular are eager to build a peaceful place for their children to live. Significant social challenges exist for girls and women living in Obunga, and this theme surfaced in every interview I conducted. The social issues raised in this theme correlated to two others: the perceived lack of resources available to women in the community and to the school, and the barriers to implementing the sports program. The teachers shared their hesitancy toward taking time out of the regular school curriculum to provide supplementary PE or extra curricular programming, though they acknowledged that the time available would increase when the girls move to their new boarding school facility. Despite the social challenges for girls and women in Obunga, and despite the perceived lack of resources available to them (e.g. financial, small staff, perceived lack of expertise to lead various activities), there was an overriding sense of hope and ambitious vision among the teachers and founders at Akili. This eagerness to collaborate to build a productive, unifying school culture was at the core of our interviews and discussions. Though the sports program is still in its early stages, the groundwork is in place for ongoing dialogue and planning, and there is a willingness among teachers and founders to begin implementing some of the ideas shared during group discussions.

Limitations of this study

Perhaps the most significant limitation to this research, and to its ability to build conclusive arguments was the relatively short period of time I had to conduct the research. Though my focus was initially on the founders, teachers, and students at Akili Preparatory School (and remains there), I quickly discovered that a much broader community needs assessment would be requisite to develop a more in-depth understanding of the greater
Obunga and Kisumu community. In addition to my desire to conduct further research into the previous and current SDP efforts within Kisumu, and the long-term nature of development work there, I hope to continue monitoring the progress of the sports program at the school, and its impact on students and staff, as well as its ultimate impact, if any, on the larger community.

My experiences in interviewing and relationship building with participants within the context of a PAR research approach demonstrated the need for the three part method I described in my results section: Discovering the larger scope of the community → focusing on the specific case → widening back out to the needs of the greater community. My timing was such that I needed to leave the community at the initial stages of program implementation. Our study was the tip of the iceberg in terms of exploring the potential role of sport as a tool for grassroots, community level peace building. The project evolved so that we focused specifically on the potential role of sport in developing a young school’s culture and values reinforcement, and ideally we would eventually explore its contribution to a larger community peace building effort (e.g. through future engagement with other schools in the community). Ongoing communications with teachers and founders, and future visits to the school will provide more definitive answers as to how their sports program and extra curricular offerings have contributed to school pride and unity among students, student leadership, positive outreach and engagement with other schools, and progress towards creating larger community peace building initiatives. I would have also liked to expand the scope of the photovoice project and the level of student involvement in the development of the sports program. I was fortunate to have the assistance of the teachers in translating both parent and student responses, and feel that given more time my relationships within the
community would have deepened further to allow for even more open dialogue and sharing, especially among the student participants.

A second limitation was the relatively low number of interview participants, due to a small staff in a young school. Over time, the school will hire more teachers that will be able to contribute to developing Akili’s culture, and perhaps bring a wider spectrum of expertise for implementing extra curricular activities. Though I did attend several meetings with a 15 member women’s group in the community, thereby gaining further insight into the challenges faced by girls and women in Obunga, (and gathered powerful stories of lived experiences in that community), I was not able to gather the consent of all members to participate officially in this study. It did not feel appropriate in all cases to turn a situation where I was a guest into a researcher-participant relationship. A more extensive study of this area would allow for more voices to be represented, gathering more shared lived experiences, and a longer term account of the progress of the sports program.

**Recommendations for further research in this field**

Truly, I believe that the validity of this research will come from the extent to which the data and analysis are able to productively serve the Akili Preparatory School now and in the future. Through this PAR study, I aimed to contribute to both the local community I am working with, as well as to a larger body of knowledge within the SDP field. Our intent was to provide a venue for dialogue and offer an opportunity for collaboration as the founders, teachers, and students form the precedent for their school culture. As Kidd stated, SDP programs “need to be linked to other interventions such as education, health and employment, i.e. to become ‘sport plus’…research in SDP must be grounded within more extensive literature on development generally” (Kidd, 2011, p. 606). In this regard, the
potential to draw connections between classroom curriculum and the development of physical education curriculum and programming was paramount to our discussions. Ideally, further research in this context would also include a more in depth literature review and analysis of the broader international development arena, as Kidd suggests. For the purposes of this study I looked at SDP specifically, but believe there is fertile ground for further examination of SDP’s potential within the larger Kisumu development context. This would require a longer-term study of Kisumu’s various development projects, and the gathering of multiple perspectives: local community members and international workers.

We also aimed to explore how incorporating sport and other extra curricular offerings into their curriculum might help Akili in the development of their school culture and in their engagement and outreach among their wider community. The unified message I heard from women in the community was that despite the many social challenges they face, they feel there has been great improvement towards peace in their area following the 2007-2008 post-election violence. They attribute factors such as increasing inter-tribal marriages, the emergence of women’s support groups, and the very presence of Akili Preparatory School as a resource for girls as contributing to this unity. Akili is experiencing many forms of momentum at the moment: the construction of a new school building and boarding house that will allow them to move into a more rural setting outside of the slum where they can expand their student capacity and program offerings on a larger property, the development of their 2020 strategic plan, outlining their plans for a growing faculty and farmland purchase at their new campus, and the current teachers’ growing awareness of their unique position and opportunity to take on leadership roles and ownership of the development of the new sports program. This awareness of ownership has the potential to empower them to feel more
engaged in their current positions, provide them with a deepened sense of agency in their employment, deepen their sense of camaraderie as a staff, and expand the skillsets and areas of expertise on their resume.

Areas of Opportunity

Following our meetings in Nairobi, Akili now has partnerships and dialogue with three new organizations that are working in girls education and sport for peace: Shining Hope for Communities, Carolina for Kibera, and Kibera Girls Soccer Academy. They have also partnered with the Young County Change Makers (YCCM Kenya) who work more locally in Kisumu as well as the U.S. Embassy during the last month.

Opportunities exist for ongoing international partnerships with Akili Preparatory School, and continued financial support for the development of their sports program. One example has been the engagement of a local Canadian athletic community. Over Labour Day Weekend 2015, 65 runners participated in the second annual Handloggers Half Marathon on Bowen Island, with proceeds from registration fees and additional donations supporting Akili Preparatory School. It is our hope that a remote community of support will continue to engage with the progress at Akili, both in their educational and extra curricular programs. I intend to return to Kisumu in January 2016 (one year after beginning this study) to see the progress at the new boarding school location and to continue in-depth dialogue with community partners about the status of their sports programming.

Current status of the program

I’ve continued my dialogue with Akili’s founders and the four teachers at Akili since my departure. They are very much committed to developing their sports program and continuing to engage in peace building activities through their own extra curricular offerings
as well as their greater community outreach. In addition, the school founders have shared that they are now applying for grants to employ a sports trainer at the school to coach the girls as they want sport to be an integral part of their programs. They also have plans to landscape the compound at their new campus site to make a playground and sports field for the girls.

Ultimately, while the founders and teachers are eager to launch their sports program, and have agreed on its value as a contributor to their developing school culture, some of the implementation plans are perhaps a bit premature at this stage. Stalled progress in the program’s development can be attributed to multiple factors such as limited budget and lack of materials (we discussed ways to creatively step around this), pressure felt by teachers to deliver classroom curriculum over supplementary sports programming and other extra curricular activities, and the young history of the school – they are still very much in the initial stages of developing their school culture and identity. Because of this, they are poised to take the sports program in whatever direction they wish, and as a private school they have an incredible opportunity to build out their extra curricular offerings and set themselves apart as a provider of enrichment programming in their wider community. I had engaged in dialogue with school founders prior to arriving in Kenya to discern whether they and their teaching staff wished to partner for this project. Their eagerness was the basis for our decision to conduct this research. Last month, the school sent two teachers to a sports training clinic focused on football for life skills co-hosted by Young County Change Makers (YCCM Kenya) and the U.S. Embassy so that they might develop their sports facilitation skills. I see this as evidence of the school’s ongoing commitment to continuing this project.
References


Appendix 1: Sample Interview Questions for School Founders and Teachers

* To be translated into Kiswahili and Luo as appropriate

1. What part of Akili’s current values-based curriculum resonates most with you?
2. How do you currently implement this values-based curriculum within the PE program at Akili, if at all?
3. What are the biggest challenges you face in connecting your classroom curriculum to the PE program?
4. What do you feel is the biggest need within the current PE program?
5. What do you feel is going well within your current PE program?
6. What potential do you see for connecting with other schools in the area through sport?

Initial Questions for Founders and Teachers (prior to project-specific dialogue):

- How long have you been living in Obunga/Kisumu?
- What progress have you seen in Kisumu since the 2007 post-election violence? How did that period engender peace building processes in this area?
1. What are some of the current social challenges you observe in Obunga? Can you provide some context for how these have arisen and how they have been addressed in the past?
2. What do you think are the priorities for Obunga and how do they relate to education?
3. How do you view Akili’s role and place within this community?
4. What are some of the limitations/challenges you perceive to Akili’s potential role for peace building within the community?
5. At this stage, what is your vision or wish for Obunga? What is your vision or wish for Akili Preparatory School?
6. Follow-up question before and after group discussions and workshops: How do you think Akili’s sports program might foster or nurture peace building within the school community? Within the greater community? As a tool for community outreach and interaction when the students transfer to the new school site in Obambo later in the year?
Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form – Alison Osborne’s Action Research Study

* Please ask if you wish for a copy of this form to be translated into Kiswahili and Luo

My name is Alison Osborne and this study is part of the requirement for my thesis research in cultural studies at Royal Roads University. For additional queries about the research, you may also contact Jennifer Walinga, Director, School of Communication and Culture, and my thesis advisor at [insert email and phone number here].

This document constitutes an agreement to participate in my research project entitled *Envisioning the role of sport as a tool for community-level peace building in Kisumu, Kenya*, the objective of which is to conduct a study on the topic of using sport participation as a potential tool for community-level peace building and community outreach in Kisumu, Kenya.

The research will consist of both a photography project with students and semi-structured interviews asking about your experiences living and working in the community (teachers and founders only), and your visions for peace building within your community, that will include information about and references to you, with name changes or anonymity if requested. This consent form seeks your consent to be included in the study. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand through a discussion of the nature of the comments to be included and the signing of this consent form. The study will require a commitment of approximately 4-6 hours per work during school hours including time for interviews, reviewing interview transcripts, helping to lead students in photovoice (photography project), group discussions, and planning and piloting programming (teachers only).

A copy of the final research project will be housed at Royal Roads University, ProQuest, Library and Archives Canada, and on RRU’s DSpace. If and before the author chooses to pursue publication with a journal or any other type of publication, further consent will be sought from you.

You are not compelled to participate in this research project. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence and will have no impact on your employment or advancement (or your grades or standing in the case of students). If you have any questions about this project or your role prior to signing this consent form, you are encouraged to speak with me (David Omondi or Erick Otieno can translate, if necessary).

By signing this letter, you understand that media such as video footage or photography may be used during and after the research process, and you agree to allow photos or video footage of you to be used in the future, e.g. in a slideshow presentation. Please indicate here if you do **not** wish for photos or videos of you to be shared beyond the dialogue during the research process in Kisumu:
By signing this letter, you give free and informed consent to be included in this project.

Name: (Please Print): __________________________________________________

Name of parent or guardian (required for students): ______________________

Signed: _____________________________________________________________

Parent signature (Required for students): __________________________________

Date: ______________________________________________________________
Appendix 3: Photovoice Consent Form (For students)

* To be translated into Kiswahili and Luo as appropriate

By signing this form, I understand that the photos I take as part of the photovoice project will be shared during discussions with Akili school founders and teachers, and may be used in future slideshows or presentations after the research is complete. I also understand that I will not be compensated for participating in the project, and that the disposable cameras will be used for the sole purpose of the study. Photos including non-participants will not be shared beyond the discussions among Akili student participants, teachers, and school founders.

I agree that photos I take may be used in both discussions and in possible future presentations after the study is complete:

Student name: _________________________
Student signature: ______________________
Parent signature: _______________________
Date: ________________________________

I agree that photos I take may be used during discussions among Akili students, teachers, and founders, but NOT in future presentations or slideshows after the study is complete:

Student name: _________________________
Student signature: ______________________
Parent signature: _______________________
Date: ________________________________