

Rugby League as a Tool for Development in Papua New Guinea: A Literature Review

Introduction

Despite rugby league's popularity on the eastern seaboard of Australia and in the north of England, Papua New Guinea is the only country where league is considered the national sport. The enthusiasm with which the sport has been embraced in PNG continues to inspire visiting players to the country, with Australian representatives David Williams and George Rose both recently quoted as being astounded by the passion with which the game is followed (ARL Media Release 2009). Indeed, the fervour and skill with which the sport has been adopted in PNG suggests two things: firstly, that with strategic development of the sport the PNG national side, the Kumuls, have the potential to be highly competitive contenders within the international rugby league scene; and secondly, that there is a grand opportunity for rugby league to be used to promote and realise broader community development ideals and goals in PNG.

At first glimpse, there may appear little common ground between the two points above. The former is concerned with pure sport development resulting in an improved elite performance; the latter is embedded in the ideals of sport for development (SFD) which views sport as a tool to promote holistic developmental processes. But there is evidence that the two points are actually far more inter-dependent than first appearances may suggest. Indeed, to ignore the connection between the two could well be to prematurely condemn both processes.

The developmental ideals and goals being alluded to through this literature are best explained from a community development perspective. Ife (2002), in outlining the principles of community development, suggests developmental projects should be holistic, sustainable, socially just and be initiated organically: that is, projects should value the skills, resources and culture of their environment and focus on processes as opposed to tangible outcomes (Ife 2002). It is these ideals which underpin the concept of international development throughout this literature review, and the concept of SFD. This is to be considered as opposed to the concept of sport development, which is focused entirely on developing a particular sport.

This tension between sport development and SFD is not a new issue, but it is an issue which has only gained serious global exposure in the past decade. While historically SFD has been predominantly considered from a Eurocentric point of view, the concept of SFD in an international context is growing in both credibility and recognition. Accordingly the literature surrounding such an issue is slowly expanding. But given the young nature of the field of SFD, both in terms of study and practice, there is still relatively limited critical analysis of issues surrounding SFD, such as the limited support the SFD concept has received from within the development sector itself (Levermore 2008; Beacom 2007).

This literature review will assess a broad range of literature relevant to the SFD concept as well as to the specific case of rugby league in PNG, including academic analysis, multi-lateral and bi-lateral commitments, as well as informal, media-driven responses to issues surrounding rugby league in PNG. Through this review, the interdependent link between the future of rugby league in PNG and development through rugby league in PNG will be drawn. The colonial roots of some sports, including rugby league in PNG, will be examined, as will the impact such initiations can have on the potential for SFD ideals to be realised. In this respect, rugby league in PNG is a pertinent example of a sport being introduced by colonialists with certain agendas but being adopted by the indigenous population in a manner which has, debatably, undermined such agendas. This adoption suggests a real potential for the sport to develop stronger links with SFD ideals and goals in the future. This review will analyse the embrace of the SFD concept at a multi-lateral level through the United Nations (UN), and the subsequent spread of awareness of the SFD concept around the globe, both through academia and civil society. The review will also acknowledge the major challenges facing SFD advocates, namely the risk of essentialising sport in development contexts through a lack of critical analysis, and the difficulties in measuring the abstract impacts of SFD ideals.

A broader assessment of the role of the development sector in PNG will then be given with a focus on the likelihood of the development of rugby league dovetailing with the priorities of the development partnership between PNG and Australia. Finally this review will look to the future of league in PNG, examining the formal partnership being formed between the Australian Rugby League, the PNG Rugby Football League, AusAID and the Australian Sports Commission, as well as the PNG NRL Bid, which while still very much in its infancy, suggests there is major government

and private sector support behind the development of the sport in both PNG and Australia. The initiation of both the partnership and the Bid suggest the next four years will be the most dynamic period in the game's history in PNG.

Sport for Development – From Imperial Tool to Multi-Lateral Darling

The introduction and imposition of sports throughout a colonially divided world through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a dubious beginning to sports development, to say the least. Leading the way in using sports as a way of imposing political agendas and to supposedly civilise local populations (Beacom 2007) was the British Empire. In the case of cricket, for example, the English did not merely introduce the new regions of their empire such as India and the Caribbean to a game; cricket came with a very entrenched class-based structure of amateurism and professionalism which the sport was played under in the mother country. As Guttmann summarises with a somewhat facetious tone: “From the British Isles, modern sports went forth to conquer the world” (Guttmann 1994).

PNG, as a former colony of Germany and the British Empire (through Australian administration), was far from immune to such colonial agendas through the period of its occupation. Missionaries such as Charles Abel from the London Missionary Society prioritised the use of sport to promote moral growth in PNG, believing “cricket and football (soccer) would instill into his boys’ minds the healthy precepts of self-mastery in place of sexual profligacy” (Wetherell 1996). Subsequent colonial leaders saw sport as a means of replacing “headhunting raids and tribal warfare” (Young and Clark 2001). The condescending prescription of sport in these contexts evoked some unique reactions from the indigenous populations. There is evidence through the 1975 documentary *Trobriand Cricket: An Indigenous Response to Colonialism* (Leach and Kildea 1975) of cricket being embraced within remote areas of rural PNG in a unique and fascinating manner which completely undermines the colonial intentions of its introduction. This film will be discussed further at a later stage of this review, as will the specific introduction of rugby league in PNG.

Beyond the era of colonialism, the connections between newly independent states around the globe and former occupiers remained a difficult relationship to buck. Self interest continued to underpin initiatives between donors and recipients (Beacom 2007, p. 88), with a condescendingly “paternalistic responsibility” (Beacom 2007, p. 86) evident in the actions of the British Empire

through its dealings with Olympic teams from the Commonwealth until the mid-twentieth century. Sport was just a minor aspect in the growing field of development where prescriptive solutions began amplifying the problems of underdevelopment and resulting in devastating dependence on financial aid (Banuri 1990; Brohman 1996).

While sport has long had loose links with the development sector, it has only been in the past decade that a multi-lateral attempt has been made to form a strategic approach to using sport as a tool for development and peace. In 2001 the UN appointed its first Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace and in 2002 the UN began to review its use of activities involving sport throughout its entire system (UN 2003). From this review a Task Force was established which in 2003 produced 'Sport for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals', a document formally acknowledging what role sport can play in realising the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

At the heart of the UN's support of sport as a tool for development is the role sport can play in the "holistic development of young people" (UN 2003, p. v). It is in the areas of health, education and communal conflict where sport was, and is still seen to have significant potential, particularly in promoting healthy behaviour, encouraging educational processes and fostering a sense of tolerance (UN 2003). While acknowledging sport was far from a cure-all formula, it was now being recognised as a "low-cost, high-impact" (Beutler 2008, p. 361) mechanism to helping achieve development goals such as the MDGs. Affirming sports new found prominence in the UN was the declaration of 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education. This move had significant ramifications for the SFD concept as until that stage there had been little continuity to the strategic design and implementation of SFD programs (Beutler 2008). Sport had moved into developmental discourse; as Levermore (2008 (b)) put it, it was "time to treat it seriously". While sport still sits at the periphery of the development sector, the recognition of its potential continues to grow rapidly.

Challenges Facing Sport for Development

In a bid to avoid the possibility of essentialising sport's role within development, this review will acknowledge the primary limitations of sport in these contexts. Much of the SFD academic literature suggests SFD is still to this day very much led by the sport sector itself, rather than through the

development sector (Levermore 2008; Beacom 2007; Kidd 2008). This raises concerns that a) without the overriding support of such ideals from within the development sector, SFD programs will be unsustainable, and b) that the agendas of sporting organisations will continue to dominate the SFD field, and that at times there is not a healthy sense of continuity between these agendas and the ideals of SFD (Levermore 2008 (a)). Again the self interest which Beacom (2007) referred to with regards to donor-led development processes comes to the fore, this time from the point of view of the sporting sector, which often sees the promotion of its own sport as the ultimate objective of such development (Levermore 2008 (a)). Kidd points out the irony of trying to marry the agendas of developing elite level sport and SFD:

Sadly, the single-minded purpose and confidence that sport instils in champions, a commendable attribute when transferred to many other settings, militates against inter-cultural sensitivity and needs-based programming in development (Kidd 2008).

While it does appear difficult to marry sport development and SFD, it is not impossible with Eurocentric research suggesting the relationship between the two forms of development can be a functional one (Houlihan & White 2002; Collins 2008).

Another limitation in the field of SFD is the difficulties involved with measuring the impacts of sport in developmental contexts. According to Kidd “direct evidence of the impact of sport on character and behaviour is often missing and quite equivocal” (Kidd 2007, p. 162). It is far easier to measure the success of sports programs through monitoring statistics such as program attendance rates rather than collating evidence of changes in attitudes and improvements in mental well being. But statistics really only measure the popularity of a sport in a quantitative manner, rather than measuring the qualitative impacts a program is having. Gasser and Levinsen admitted as much when saying the idea that sport can have lasting social impacts beyond the sport itself “is based on assumptions that are articles of faith for many of those designing or funding sport programs with social goals” (Gasser and Levinsen 2004, p. 469). Even in relatively functional, Eurocentric settings, providing evidence of impacts has been difficult, despite pressure from donors to produce these sorts of results (Beacom, 2007). In developmental environments, where theoretically the focus

ideally lies on process rather than outcomes (Ife 2002), obtaining and quantifying results of such impacts can be even more challenging.

There is evidence of research (Cunningham & Beneforti 2005) into the area of discovering what indicators would be most relevant to measuring the impacts of sport programs in Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, Australia. This research was undertaken through the Australian Sports Commission and suggests a combination of program viability and sustainability indicators, participation indicators and outcome indicators are all necessary to gauge a program's effectiveness. While anecdotally there is indications that sport and recreation programs can impact upon issues such as "crime, school attendance, substance abuse, self-harm, violence and social cohesion" (Cunningham & Beneforti 2005, p. 96), the study acknowledges the need for stronger evidence still. There is also evidence of a Sport Development Impact Assessment Tool (SDIAT) being produced through the Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg, South Africa. This monitoring and evaluation tool involves structured interviews, questionnaires and focus groups to obtain information useful to the 'human and social development' aspect of the research (Burnett & Hollander nd). While a positive step forward, the tool appears to have its limitations, in that it focuses on measuring the impacts of elite level sport and that the information obtained is still difficult to quantify and validate. But the research suggests there appears to be some hope that a relevant and appropriate tool to measure impacts is not too far away.

While the body of literature relevant to the field of SFD is growing, there appear significant gaps in the literature which require attention. Two major issues which appear to have been generally neglected to this stage are the prevalence of gender biases in SFD practice and theory, and the potential for broader economic impacts through sport in developmental settings, particularly in terms of poverty alleviation. It is highly likely literature relevant in these areas would also be relevant to the development of rugby league in PNG.

Evidently there are a number of crucial issues currently facing the SFD sector. Glossing over such issues, or worse still, ignoring the issues all together will merely serve to undermine SFD's potential to have effective impacts in developmental settings. The risk of essentialising sport's role in development needs to be addressed through further critical analysis of SFD practice and theory;

concerted efforts from within the industry need to be made to develop reliable, relevant and appropriate methods of measuring the social and cultural impacts of sport, particularly in developing environments; the development sector needs to be engaged with in a more effective manner to ensure the sustainability of SFD projects, and the SFD concept in general; and finally the effectiveness of the use of celebrities to promote SFD messages needs to be assessed through a critical lens. If these issues which sit at the heart of SFD are not addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, the SFD concept will suffer and sport's potential in development will not be properly realised.

Rugby League – Potential Impacts and Real Challenges

Another issue facing SFD, and the broader sports development field, is the harmful impact the misbehaviour of high profile professional players can have on promoting developmental ideals. Few would argue the 2009 rugby league season in Australia is an ideal example of players' misbehaviour having a negative impact on the image of the sport. For example Australian representative Greg Inglis was charged with reckless injury and unlawful assault following an incident with his ex-girlfriend in August 2009. He was subsequently relieved of his role as an Aboriginal Ambassador to the game (Read 2009), but still received the prestigious Golden Boot in November 2009, recognising his status as the best player in the world that year. Despite his proclamations of innocence, the unresolved court matter serves as a relevant example of a situation where a star player's profile can potentially harm the promotion of the game and broader SFD messages.

Even discounting the poor behaviour of some celebrity athletes and the detrimental impact it has on the perception of professionals as role models, it remains debatable how effective using celebrities to promote developmental messages is. Wilde (2007) suggests the campaign in PNG to use famous Australian footballers such as Brad Fittler to lift the public awareness of issues pertaining to HIV/AIDS and to promote the use of condoms has done little to impact on the use of condoms by males in rural areas of PNG such as Western Province. Instead Wilde believes a stronger understanding of reasons as to why men are reluctant to use condoms must be taken into consideration when developing strategies to effectively promote condom usage (Wilde 2007). This is a pertinent example of how the use of celebrity athletes to promote SFD messages can fail to engage with the intended audience. Such campaigns can really only play a complementary role in promoting

messages because they do not engage directly with the issue at hand. While Fittler was considered a good role model in the latter stages of his career, it is debatable if placing such responsibility on players' shoulders is worthwhile given the potential damage which can be done to a campaign if the player fails to live up to the expectations of such scenarios. NRL players have also been involved in HIV awareness programs over the past two years during the Australian Prime Minister's XIII match against the Kumuls in Port Moresby (Committee on HIV Prevention Through Sport 2009). There is no evidence that these campaigns engage with any issues pertaining to gender, which AusAID has identified as the issue which cuts across the seven focus areas of the Papua New Guinea National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS 2006-2010 (AusAID 2006).

However, there is strong evidence of rugby league having a positive impact on aspects of community development, particularly in far north Queensland. By far the most pertinent example of this is the Normanton Stingers rugby league club which in October 2008 was awarded the Australian Crime and Prevention Award in Canberra following its implementation of the 'Domestic Violence – It's Not Our Game' campaign at the beginning of 2007. The campaign involved the public promotion of anti-domestic violence messages and the suspension of any players charged by police for committing acts of domestic violence. In the following two seasons domestic violence charges in the community dropped by a staggering 55 percent (Ironsides 2008). Normanton Police Liaison Officer Laurie West was quoted as saying "I doubt the campaign would have been so successful if the Stingers hadn't got behind it. The whole town loves them and because of them, they're taking domestic violence seriously" (Ironsides 2008).

Prior to this, the establishment of the Cape York Rugby League competition in 2002, which involves 19 teams from the region, was seen as a very positive step towards regional cohesion and providing opportunities for community and personal development. The competition's committee has supported strategies to address alcohol abuse and domestic violence in the region's communities through the establishment of men's groups and making all games within the competition alcohol free (Spence 2002). In 2009 the competition used a grant to have all jerseys used in the region emblazoned with the moniker 'Violence No Way'. This initiative was supported through the local police and Queensland Rugby League in an attempt to show violence should not be tolerated on the field or off it (QRL 2009).

Situating Development in PNG

A brief history of development in PNG

Papua New Guinea is considered one of the most rich and diverse areas of the globe, both in terms of its cultures and resources. Within a population of more than six million people, about one fifth of the world's total languages are spoken there, more than in all of Africa (Reilly & Phillipot 2002). Such cultural diversity has led many to believe PNG's people "are fragmented into hundreds of often mutually antipathetic ethnic groupings" (Hegarty 1979) with little sense of a common national identity or political and social unity. Others have argued it is this strong sense of diversity which has been integral in the continuity of PNG's "remarkably vibrant and resilient democratic system" (Diamond 1989) since independence in 1975.

But PNG faces significant developmental issues relating directly to health, education and economics. In 2009 an estimated 2.56 percent of the adult population are living with HIV/AIDS and it is believed this number is growing annually by 15-30 percent (AusAID 2009; Wendt 2005); approximately 58 percent of the population does not have access to safe drinking water (Wendt 2005); only 56 percent of females over the age of 15-years-old are literate (Reilly & Phillipot 2002; Wendt 2005); an estimated 31 percent of all people over the age of 15-years-old have no cash income earning activity. Such statistics have led PNG to be ranked 133 out of 175 countries on the UN Human Development Index (UNDP 2003; AusAID 2004).

The state has played a central role in the establishment of a direction for development in PNG, with varying degrees of success. The overarching development strategy which has underpinned PNG's Medium Term Development Strategy 2005-2010 (MTDS) is defined within the document as "export-driven economic growth, rural development and poverty reduction" (MTDS 2004). This objective has been elaborated through ten guiding principles which cover areas of economics, governance and community development aimed at improving the quality of life of Papua New Guineans. This document is about to be superseded by the National Strategic Plan 2010-2050 which is seen as "the Government's blueprint for national progress and development" (Philemon 2009). At

the centre of this new document are seven priorities, known as Strategic Focus Areas: human capital development, gender, youth and people empowerment; wealth creation; institutional development and service delivery; security and international relations; environmental sustainability and climate change; spiritual, cultural and community development; and strategic planning, integration and control (Arek 2009). While these priorities do appear to be a condensation of the ten guiding principles in the MTDS, there does appear a promising shift in focus to the development of human capital.

Nadarajah, in a brief assessment of development projects in PNG for the National Research Institute, suggests that development projects are most successful in PNG when they “originated from the people according to their knowledge and needs, and thus the will to carry them out was there” (Nadarajah 1995). This pro-participatory stance has many advocates throughout the development sector and appears to have been embraced to some extent within PNG’s Department for Community Development which published an Integrated Policy paper promoting the establishment of community learning centres throughout the country using participatory methodology to encompass a sense of relevance into the program (Department for Community Development 2007).

Australia’s current presence in PNG

The Australian Government is currently PNG’s most significant development partner, contributing AUS\$414 million in Official Development Assistance between 2009 and 2010 (AusAID 2009). There is also considerable support in PNG offered through the Australian NGO sector (Wendt 2005), through organisations such as the Australian arm of Oxfam. The Australian Government’s developmental support of PNG appears highly conditional on the PNG Government’s commitment and ability to implement transparent and accountable practices with a focus on macroeconomic policy, law and governance (Partnership for Development 2008). This focus has been criticised in the past as simplifying the problems of PNG and ignoring the unhealthy legacy of the colonial history of the nation (Foster 2006). PNG has been occupied by both German and British authority since 1884, with Australia acting as the country’s former colonial administrator through much of the twentieth century, and Foster’s criticism suggests this colonial relationship has had a significant impact on PNG’s ability to implement effective systems of law and governance since independence.

Foster is particularly critical of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute's report which characterises PNG as a state of "weak" institutions where moral "corruption" has penetrated to the state's demise (Foster 2006, p. 744). The report pinpoints PNG's cultural diversity as highly problematic, saying "the absence of a sense of nationhood is the foundation of many of PNG's problems" (ASPI 2004, p. 34). Given the updated Partnership's commitment to developing the political and legal systems of PNG do not involve explicit acknowledgement of the detrimental impact of the country's colonial past, Foster's criticism appears to remain well founded.

Evidence of successful development projects in PNG

In examining what models of development have worked most effectively in PNG in the past, one is led to an unlikely region of the country. In the far north east of the country, where Bougainville has been devastated by a civil war which lasted through much of the 1990s, peacebuilding processes which marry customary processes with introduced practices have thus far been considered very successful at brokering a peace between warring clans and the state, and beginning the reconstruction of a functional and peaceful community (Boege 2006). The absence of the state in the initial stages of this process has been identified as one of the key reasons for its success thus far because it has given the community the chance to focus on communal processes first and concentrate on state related issues when the community feels capable of addressing such issues productively (Boege 2006).

Elsewhere, the Yumi Lukautim Mosbi campaign, which has included sport to promote messages against domestic violence, crime and anti-social behaviour, is evidence of sport already having been identified within the development sector of PNG as a tool with the potential of engaging with a broad part of the population, particularly youth (Dorney 2008). The campaign involved Marcus Bai, PNG's most successful, retired rugby league player promoting both the campaign and its messages. As discussed previously, involving sport stars with massive public profiles in this sense can be problematic because it does not necessarily engage directly with issues being championed. But Bai's involvement in the Yumi Lukautim Mosbi campaign appears to have effectively lifted the profile of the campaign given the underwhelming results of an impact evaluation prior to Bai's involvement (Justice Advisory Group 2006).

As well as promoting messages against domestic violence, another focus of the Yumi Lukautim Mosbi campaign is to engage with young males vulnerable to moving into the notorious ‘rascal’ groups in the Port Moresby region. Ahai and Faraclas suggest rascals are unfairly projected as “the most despised members of PNG society” (Ahai & Faraclas 1993, p. 84). These authors suggest it is media-driven criticism which places the cause for a supposed law and order problem squarely on the shoulders of rascals. They argue rascalism is a reaction to the “extreme inequalities and injustices produced by the economics of neo-colonialism and the neo-colonial education system” (Ahai & Faraclas 1993, p. 84) and suggest such a sub-culture is consequently “understandable” (Ahai & Faraclas 1993, p. 84). The Yumi Lukautim Mosbi campaign is a relevant example of the potential for sport to play a role in engaging with rascals, with Bai advocating that involvement in such a program can improve productivity for youth and lead rascals away from crime (Dorney 2008). While there appears little analysis of such supposed impacts, the potential of such a program becomes clear through the evident participation of youth (Dorney 2008). Reilly and Phillpot (2002) also validate Putnam’s method of using sport participation as an indicator of social capital in PNG. They found a “positive correlation” between provincial development through rural regions of PNG and the number of players participating in rugby league clubs in those areas (Reilly and Philpott 2002, p. 915).

Sport’s position in PNG

While politically the impact of colonisation appears to have been far reaching in PNG, with the complications of the nation’s legal system in the wake of independence a pertinent example (Reilly and Philpott 2002), there is evidence that in the field of sport Papua New Guinean communities have had an at times fascinating and empowering reaction to the introduction of some sports. The 1975 documentary *Trobriand Cricket: An Indigenous Response to Colonialism* is an example of Papua New Guineans embracing a colonial sport in their own unique manner. The community’s new game combines some of the simple elements of cricket, a team sport involving a bat and ball, with customary dances and chants to express competitiveness in a culturally appropriate sense. The Trobriand communities which participate in this game have an evident sense of ownership of the game through the lack of commonality between the new sport and its colonial precursor, and also because it has taken on such a unique meaning within the community. This adaptation of the game reflects the different perception of the role sport can play within a community in rural areas of

PNG. This is an issue of particular interest to Wilde who, through working directly with people in Gogodala in Western Province, argues that sport, specifically rugby league, has become an expression of work and culture which has major significance to the customary male way of life known as 'dala ela gi' (Wilde 2004, p. 287). This argument has support from previous anthropological work in the area which suggests there is not a strong distinction between work and play in village life, as there is in Western settings (Turner 1982). This is because sport, along with work, is an area in which a male can exhibit his physical capabilities, thus asserting himself within the community and developing his own self-perception (Wilde 2004). A significant sense of ownership of the sport of rugby league in these regional areas of PNG is also evident in the "strong internalisation of rules, organisation, spectatorship and sportsmanship" (Knauff 2002).

This sense of ownership which PNG communities have for the sport of rugby league is further evidence of the potential the sport has to promote broader SFD ideals and goals. But if rugby league is to be successfully used as a tool of development, it must embrace this cultural ownership of the game in areas throughout PNG. Beacom (2007) suggests as much in referring to sport in general:

If it is to transcend the label of 'diffusion' and the characteristics of early twentieth-century imperial communication of modern sporting forms, it must be prepared to accommodate a variety of cultural perspectives in the organization and broader governance of sport (Beacom 2007, p. 100).

Foster argues against the use of sport in this context saying that sport, particularly rugby league, is continually being used in PNG as a "new rhetoric of muscular Christianity" (Foster 2006, p. 745). It is here that Foster's argument stumbles as rugby league, for good or for bad, and despite its dubious colonial history in PNG, is now very much entrenched in PNG society. Rugby league's presence in PNG can only be ignored at the peril of those, such as Foster, who propose idyllic development in an academic context, rather than actual development in a practical context. While those who see the potential of sport in developing contexts must not fall into the trap of over-simplifying problems and solutions, to ignore the captive audience sports hold across the globe, and rugby league holds in PNG, is to ignore a massive population and an equally huge opportunity.

Looking to the future

Interest in the development of rugby league in PNG spiked during the 2008 Rugby League World Cup, driven through the international media and resulting in a \$20 million commitment from the PNG Government to establishing a PNG-based team in the Australasian National Rugby League competition (Walter and Stevenson 2008; Mascord 2008). PNG's recent victory in the 2009 Pacific Cup means the Kumuls will participate in the 2010 Four Nations tournament, again ensuring international exposure to the plight of the game in PNG. Aside from this exposure, the game has already been identified as a tool of great potential, with rugby league acknowledged at the 2009 Pacific Islands Forum as one sport worthy of further funding in PNG through the Australian and New Zealand Governments (Pacific Island Secretariat 2009, p. 5). This announcement has resulted in AUS\$4 million being committed to a partnership between the ARL, the PNGRFL, the Australian Sports Commission and AusAID. All information regarding this formal partnership has been obtained through an interview with Tony McGee, AusAID's Sport for Development Advisor in Canberra which was conducted on 18 November 2009.

At present, the five-year partnership is moving from the first stage of getting each major stakeholder to officially commit to the partnership into the second stage, the planning process. The final stage of implementation is expected to run from early 2010 until mid-2014. The commitment that is being agreed to is not a legally binding contract but a collaborative arrangement which seeks to address risks from the points of view of each stakeholder while affirming the common objectives of the parties involved. At this early stage there is government involvement as the details of the partnership are being confirmed, but it is expected the implementation stage will be conducted primarily by the PNGRFL in partnership with the ARL.

While no public announcement has been made regarding the partnership at this stage, McGee believes there are three major, broad objectives within the partnership: that the work involved facilitates an active, open relationship between the stakeholders; that the outcomes are rugby league specific; and that the work delivers social dividends. To this extent there will be a focus on strengthening the structure of the rugby league's administration throughout PNG; and that pathways are developed to give junior league players the opportunity to play in structured competitions which feed into senior competitions. The current lack of a structured junior competition has been

identified as one of the major obstacles to an effectively run rugby league program in PNG. Grassroots development of the sport is considered essential to the effective development of league and realising broader developmental goals, and it is in this area where the ARL partnership is intended to be most impactful. For example, providing junior coaches with effective training and an understanding of broad coaching principles which are relevant in the PNG context is expected to be one part of the partnership's implementation stage.

From AusAID's point of view, the partnership must facilitate a healthy relationship between the stakeholders. In this respect, there is an acute consciousness of the need for a flexible approach in terms of planning and implementation. The program is intended to be very context specific; while there are effectively structured junior rugby league competitions in Australia, with New South Wales' tiered schoolboy system considered a prime example, whether such structures will work in PNG is debatable. A necessarily flexible approach has been employed in the planning stage thus far, and will continue to be employed through both the rest of the planning stage and the implementation stage of the project.

Having said this, the partnership is also conscious of complementing the other work currently being undertaken to develop rugby league in PNG. For example the PNG NRL Bid is attempting to have a PNG-based rugby league team admitted into the NRL by 2013. While this Bid is being conducted entirely independent of the partnership, the partnership is conscious that the criteria which the NRL has in place for a new club to be admitted is very much worth taking into account at this early stage of developing the sport. Given the formality of the Bid, this is indeed a warranted approach. Primary information regarding the PNG NRL Bid has been recorded through an interview with Paul Broughton, a leading member of the Bid Team, which was conducted on 17 November 2009, while some supplementary information has been procured from the Bid's website.

While the partnership appears conscious of the need to take into account the work of the Bid, the feeling is not necessarily reciprocated. The PNG NRL Bid was launched in July 2009 (AAP 2009) with the one agenda of having a team admitted to the NRL by 2013. While developing the structure of rugby league in PNG is crucial to this goal, those leading the Bid do not consider the embrace of broader SFD ideals as significant, or even appropriate to the role of the Bid. The Bid's website does

say the Bid will endeavour to develop appropriate social programs in PNG and that the efforts of the Bid are aligned with social programs already targeted by rugby league's governing bodies (PNG NRL Bid 2009). But at this stage it appears the intention is that these broader goals will be realised incidentally through the development of the sport. Broughton acknowledges the work of the partnership will be vital to developing the grassroots levels of rugby league in PNG, which is an essential part of the games' overall development. But Broughton believes the focus of the Bid needs to remain steadily fixed on producing a top-level rugby league club which fulfils the criteria required by the NRL, rather than concentrating on delivering broader developmental goals.

Even a brief consideration of the ambitious idea of having a PNG team in the NRL flags some obvious issues. These include security; infrastructure and economic sustainability. While Broughton admits security remains a difficult issue to address, the Bid is buoyed by the fact PNG has been selected to host the 2015 South Pacific Games (Puarua 2009) and will be expected to meet infrastructure standards for that event. The Bid also has plans to construct a stadium in Port Moresby which will act as a hotel and will provide corporate-based opportunities to view matches. This plan directly relates to the economic sustainability of the project which Broughton admits will also be dependent on an allotment of the lucrative television rights which the NRL is due to renegotiate in 2012 (Masters 2009 (a) and (b)). An announcement is expected in the near future regarding naming rights for the Bid with Broughton suggesting interest in financial sponsorship of the Bid from within the PNG business community is very strong, even at this early stage. This is on top of the commitment of \$20 million from the PNG Government for the Bid.

The Bid Team is made up of three current or former Papua New Guinean members of parliament, two prominent figures of the Australian rugby league scene, namely Broughton who headed the successful bid of the Gold Coast Titans which was the last club to be admitted to the NRL and former Kangaroos captain and current Queensland coach Mal Meninga, as well as a representative of PNG's business sector. The high profile of the team is likely to garner further support from throughout the rugby league community with the rugby league associations of other Pacific nations already publicly supporting the Bid (Omaro 2009).

Through speaking to relevant parties and assessing what little literature is available at this stage which is relevant to the two proposed projects of the partnership between the ARL and the PNGRFL and the PNG NRL Bid, it becomes apparent the process of developing rugby league in PNG is being instigated from within the sport itself with the support of government. The next four years will undoubtedly be a dynamic period for rugby league in PNG, with the partnership implementing its activities to develop the grassroots level of the game, and the Bid moving ahead with its ambition of having a PNG-based team admitted to the NRL by 2013. But the motives of all stakeholders need to be examined in more detail to assess if there is an appropriate sense of continuity between such agendas. Without such continuity, these projects will run this risk of becoming unsustainable, ineffective and consequently could collapse.

Conclusion

The purpose of this review has been to examine the primary issues relevant to the development of rugby league in PNG. An assessment of literature relevant to the field of sport for development suggests there are significant challenges facing such an area of practice and theory, namely that it still sits on the periphery of the development sector and that it lacks substantial critical analysis. Similarly, PNG faces many developmental challenges, such as issues pertaining to the spread of HIV/AIDS and low levels of literacy. There is evidence of effective developmental programs which embrace the cultural diversity of PNG being implemented in areas of the country, such as peacebuilding processes in Bougainville and the Yumi Lukautim Mosbi campaign in Port Moresby. To date, rugby league has had only minor involvement in developmental projects. But as the national sport of PNG, league has been identified as a potential tool to help engage with some of the specific challenges PNG is facing.

Through this review a link has been made between the growth of league in PNG and the opportunity to embrace broader sport for development ideals. This link suggests that not only would the embrace of these broader community development ideals be beneficial for PNG's overall development, but it would be vital to the sustainability of rugby league's growth in the country too. There are currently two projects which are likely to have a massive impact on the development of the sport in PNG over the next five years, namely the PNG NRL Bid and the multi-laterally supported partnership between the ARL and the PNGRFL. There again appears a link between the

two projects which if not identified and appropriately managed could be detrimental to the success and sustainability of both projects. Crucial to this link being effectively made is the clear expression of the motives behind both projects in the near future in order to establish a sense of continuity between these motives for the sake of rugby league's development in PNG. In this respect, the stakeholders involved with the development of rugby league in PNG can learn from an apt quote by SFD academic Beacom:

Transparency of motives and recognition of the wider challenges to the integrity of the development assistance process should inform and direct future engagement in international sport development (Beacom 2007, p. 104).

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