CHAPTER ONE
SPORTS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN AFRICA

Governance Challenges in Sport in East Africa

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Introduction

Sport is an activity that attracts the interest of millions of people all over the world. It is indeed, considered a universal activity that permeates every society at every corner of the world (Skogvang et al, 2000). Sugden (2010) realizing the importance of sport in society noted that the fraternal and character building qualities of sport and its capacity to bring together diverse people and communities as demonstrated in regional sport festivals (such as the challenge cup, the EAUG) make sport a social good. Other than serving the purpose of entertainment to spectators, sports contribute to physical wellness or health of the individual participants and to the socio-economic and political development of a country.

It is due to the benefits associated with sports that people take keen interest in their various sporting activities. Specifically, the benefits of sports at the level of individual participants have been identified to include:

- Enhancement of their physical fitness and health.
- Prevention and management of hypokinetic health conditions such as arthritis, hypertension, diabetes and coronary heart disease. This can lead to substantial savings on the cost of healthcare.
- Development of character; through sports, people learn the virtues of hard work, tolerance, perseverance, respect for rules (law) and respect for the rights of others.
- Sports serves as a tool of bringing people together and socializing.
- Offering freedom from tension, stressful situations, offering relief from built-up tensions and negative emotions.

At societal level, the socio-economic, cultural and political benefits of sports include:

- Given the popularity of sports, commercial organizations use sporting events to advertize and market their goods and services so as increase their sales and profits (Mwisukha et al, 2003).
- Serves as commercial industry that generates employment for many people such as coaches, sports administrators, sports facility managers, professional sportsmen and sportswomen, and others.
- Manufacturing of sports goods/products that are sold to earn foreign exchange.
• Development of sports facilities such as stadiums, swimming pools, golf courses and gymnasiums have the multiplier effect of development of associated infrastructure such as roads, water supply, electricity/power supply, hotels, health facilities, shopping centres and others.

• By hosting major international sports events, a country is able to publicize itself to the rest of the world or market itself as a tourist destination.

• It is used as a catalyst for national unity; whenever local teams compete against foreign teams, the local people come together irrespective of their ethnic, racial and religious difference to support their teams.

• Victory of a country in international sports events generates feelings of national pride and enhances patriotism among the citizens of the country.

Coakley (1998) outlines the following benefits:

1. To protect people and maintain order, this includes protecting individuals and groups with different interests. This is done by making rules about what types of sports are legal or illegal, how sports are organised and managed, financed, eliminate conflicts by regulating the use of public facilities and playing fields through reservation or permit systems.

2. To develop and maintain fitness and physical abilities among citizens. Many people believe that sport participation improves fitness, fitness improves health and good health reduces medical costs.

3. To promote the prestige of a nation in wider realms of political relations.

4. To promote a sense of identity, belonging and unity (solidarity) among citizens.

5. To reaffirm political ideology within a group, by emphasising the values and orientations consistent with dominant political ideology in a society such as fight against corruption, dictatorship, AIDS, and the like.

6. To increase the legitimacy of the political system and the people in power. i.e. to increase citizen support of political leaders and the political structures they represent.

7. To promote general economic development in the community or society. For instance, when a country hosts an event, people may be employed for various purposes, sell goods, food, and other economic benefits.

Structures of Sports Governance in the East Africa Region

In order to ensure effective and efficient management of sports, several management structures have been formed and/or established over the years in the countries of the East Africa region. The main structures include:
i. Establishment of national sports councils to coordinate the activities of the national sports federations, each of which is responsible for a given sports discipline in each of the country. These include Uganda’s National Council of Sports established in 1964, Kenya National Sports Council established in 1966 and the National Sport Council of Tanzania founded in 1967 through parliamentary acts.

ii. Creation of government ministries and departments to provide sporting services to the public. The ministries are served by public servants (Sport Officers) whose main responsibility is to oversee the formulation and implementation of policies that are geared towards the development of sports.

iii. Establishment and operations of the National Olympic Committees whose role is to facilitate the participation of the countries’ athletes in the Olympic Games. These include the Tanzania Olympic Committee for Tanzania, National Olympic Committee-Kenya for Kenya and the Uganda Olympic Committee for Uganda.

iv. The three countries have national sports federations, most of which were founded in the 1960’s and 1970s, and whose role is to coordinate and organize sporting activities in their respective sports disciplines.

v. Local authorities have welfare departments in the cities, towns, municipal and county councils whose responsibilities, among others, are to render sports services to the people within their respective areas of jurisdiction.

vi. There exist national sports associations for educational institutions that coordinate sports events for the institutions.

vii. A good number of government departments, parastatals, commercial and other quasi-government organizations have sports departments that organize and coordinate sports programmes for their employees.

viii. Establishment of Sports policies to give direction to the development of sport in respective countries.

Governance Challenges in Sports in East Africa Region.

In spite of the existence of several structures for sports governance, there are many challenges faced in ensuring effective and efficient delivery of sport services in the three countries of the East Africa region. The most evident ones are as outlined below:

i. Most of the personnel serving in the various national sports federations and organizations as managers are not trained professionals in the areas of sports management and administration. Leadership in the sports federations is open to “every other” person who has the interest to provide the required leadership so long as he/she is able to win elections.

ii. The role of the international sport federations in handling and intervening in the affairs of the national sports federations has not been clearly spelt out. The international sports Federations (such as FIFA, IAAF etc) have been often accused of intervening in the affairs of their respective
national sports federations without consideration or concern for national interests and needs. As a result of their interventions, ineffective, inefficient and sometimes corrupt officials take the advantage of staying in office much longer than necessary or more productive end up being removed from office. There is need for government interventions because of the need for sponsorship, organization, facilities and the fact that people involved in sports can be problematic all these need government regulation and control (Coakley, 1998).

iii. There is no clear hierarchical arrangement and coordination of the roles of government sports agents and those of the national sports federations and organizations. The various national sports federations and organizations tend to operate independently from the government agents that are in charge of sports but only appear to work together in times of need, and for convenience.

iv. The development of sports depends, to a large extent, on the policies that are formulated to give direction to the efforts of the sports managers/administrators and other sports personnel involved in sports. Unfortunately, there has been no national sports policy to guide the development of sports in Kenya in spite of the attempts that have been made to formulate it. In the absence of a national sport policy, it is not possible to effectively regulate the development of sports. In Tanzania, although there is a sports policy, its implementation has not been realized. For example, the policy states, inter alia making Physical Education compulsory at all levels but PE is still taught as an extra curricula activity.

v. In order for sports organizations to address various issues affecting sports and changing situations and perceptions, it is imperative for them to regularly review their constitutions that govern their operations. However, the duration of time over which the organizations’ constitutions should be in force is hardly spelt out or specified. As such, some national sports federations and organizations tend to use outdated constitutions that are out of touch with prevailing circumstances.

vi. Funding for sports development has been a persistent problem faced in the management of sports in the countries of East Africa (Shehu, 1998; Mwisukha et al., 2007). For instance, in a study on the training of athletics coaches in Kenya, Mwisukha et al. (2007) noted that inadequate funding is the main problem faced in the implementation of training programmes for the coaches. A part from this, contingents of teams destined for international competitions are often reduced to very small numbers due to limited funds to cater for their allowances/and upkeep during training and competitions (Shehn, 1998). The inadequacy of funding also adversely affects the amount and variety of incentives that are given to the athletes: and this in turn kills their motivation towards striving for enhanced performance.

vii. A substantial number of outstanding athletes from the East Africa region, specifically Kenya, have been relocating to other foreign countries, and even changing their citizenship. This is an indicator that the sporting environment in the region may not be favorable for athletes.

viii. Disputes and wrangles are a common phenomenon in many sports federations. The officials often wrangle over leadership positions and for opportunities to control financial and other material
resources. The negative consequences of such conflicts include diversion of attention from the agenda for sports development, withdrawal of corporate sponsorships, court cases, neglect of sportsmen and sportswomen and imposition of international sanction by international sports federations.

ix. Several studies in the East Africa region have revealed gender imbalance in sports participation and leadership; women are under-represented as compared to men (Kateshumbwa, 2010; Mwisukha et al., 2007; Simiyu et al., 2003).

x. Absence of political will to establish and implement sport policies that could be used as framework for sport development. Much of what politicians do is geared towards their own personal gains (to win elections) but there are no specific strategies that are meant for institutional changes or reforms intended for the development of sports.

xi. The need for having an organization for Sport Management and Administration. This can be used as a forum for those involved in sports. As we have seen every sport organization works on its own. Having an organization can help put concerted efforts together and work towards sport development in the region.

Way Forward for Management of Sports in the East Africa Region

In view of the problems and challenges associated with the management of sports in the countries of East Africa, there is need for streamlining of the same. The following suggestions are advanced towards that end:

i. There is urgent to professionalize the management of sports in the region. A requirement for professional training in sports management and or related fields as criteria for appointment or election into management positions should emphasized and enforced. Such an undertaking is squarely in the hands of the relevant government authorities that are responsible for policy formulation and implementation.

ii. In order to regulate the management of sports, the formulation and enforcement of national policies on sports is mandatory (Munayi, 2000). Although Tanzania and Uganda have national sports policies in place, they are yet to be fully implemented because there still exist many areas of governance that need to be addressed such as dismal performances in international sports events and wrangling in sports organizations. National sports policies need to effectively capture the following key areas:

- Specify the structure and hierarchy for sports management in each country. This includes outlining clear of the various organizations involved in the management of sports so as to eliminate duplication and conflict in the roles of the organizations.

- The policy should also highlight various sports development plans and strategies.

- Since conflicts have been disturbing phenomena in sports organizations, the policy must put forward concrete measures and structures for conflict resolution in the organizations.
Acquisition and proper utilization of the resources in the realm of sports management should be captured. The way resources such as money, manpower, time and other material resources are to be availed and used must be clearly specified in the policy document to avoid abuse and or wastage of the resources.

In view of the importance and complexity of a policy document, it should be formulated by suitably knowledgeable and skilled personnel.

iii. The need for firmly established national training programmes for sports personnel is of great necessity. Mwisukha et al (2007), for instance, advocate for a centralized national academy, institute or organization to train sports managers and other technical personnel. Such an institution should be set up with joint efforts of the government, national sports organizations and their international bodies so that the certification is recognized by all the concerned parties. This way, the much-needed personnel who are knowledgeable and skilled will be availed to steer the development of sports in the country.

iv. Since funding of sports programmes has been a thorny issue in the development of sports, more alternative ways of raising the required funds must be constantly explored. This is particularly necessary in the face of the ever-diminishing, government budgets for sports (Mwisukha et al., 2007; Shehu, 1998). Shehu (1998) therefore, outlines the many other alternative ways of raising funds for sports programmes as including the following:

- Institution of raffles and lotteries
- Organizing more frequent sports clinics, coaching courses and seminars from which money can be generated.
- Maximizing on gate-collections and hire of sports facilities for national and international events.
- Initiating of sponsorship deals with the corporate organizations. This is an endeavour that should involve having knowledge of potential sponsors, their interest in giving sponsorship and developing mutual relationships.

Conclusion

Although it is not possible to eliminate all the problems and challenges facing the management of sports in most countries, there is need for strategies to minimize them and ensure effective and efficient management of sports.

The most viable strategies are only possible if the sports programmes in each county are managed by personnel who possess the right knowledge and skills of management, and committed to apply the appropriate approaches, procedures and policies geared towards enhancing the standards of sports.

References


The Nexus of Sports in African Universities: Management Challenges