

Air Badminton: A game to promote well-being and livelihood among young people in low-income communities

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Introduction

A visit along the coast to purchase fish landed us in one of the low-income urban communities foxed with social issues of poor sanitation, skin bleaching, teenage pregnancy, and school dropouts among teens and young adults in Eguaboano environs. This same community is without a sporting facility, with most school dropouts aged between 8 and 17. They are uneducated, which can make them vulnerable to such social issues. Winneba Municipality has produced young best badminton players for Ghana, and some can serve as role models in the communities. Young people in such communities rarely find space to play sports and its absence may put them “at -risk” in Eguaboano¹ (see Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011).

Protecting young people from becoming vulnerable can improve their well-being and livelihood in the Municipality as reported by scholars (e.g., Baran et al., 2013, Castagno, 2001). The absence of basic amenities with limited spaces within the rocky locality of Eguaboano hinders playing sports. Previous studies report how individual engagement in physical activity (PA) may promote health and other benefits including having fun, enjoyment and social support, fostering identity by introducing certain sports to participants (Allender et al., 2006). Older adults’ engagement in badminton activities has improved their physical health, sports participation, well-being and continuing personal development (Chan & Lee, 2020). This makes badminton a lifetime sport and the most second popular game that people participate in the World (Chan & Lee, 2020; Samuel, 1991). The plight of young people in Eguaboano motivated the study to examine sport (air badminton) as an intervention to improve their well-being and livelihood through education and sensitization.

Methods

The study adopts a mixed-method design. A total of 72 respondents comprising 61 young people (answered questionnaires) and 11 parents (engaged in semi-structured interviews) were surveyed. Thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2021) was used to analyse the respondents’ questionnaires and semi-structured interview data. A partly mixed, synchronised, overriding status design with quantitative and qualitative elements was conducted simultaneously in totality before combining the data at the interpretation stage (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Our participants (children, teens and young adults) helped to reshape our ethical and methodological positions by considering social and cultural context (Dubinsky, 2017; Graham et al., 2013).

Results and discussion

Findings indicate that air badminton practices have improved the well-being and livelihood of participants via effective educational campaigns and sensitization. It has enhanced participants’ health status, confinement, punctuality at school, social networking, and learning values while providing them with an opportunity to play the new game in their community. Also, it has helped to identify talents and potential for further development. Numerous benefits derived from the sport have informed parents and the community to request better policies in support of sport-based intervention

programmes for young people in low-income communities, who are hardly heard. Otherwise, certain social change projects embarked on cannot yield the needed outcome in which urban poor young people are found, therefore failing to address inequality and social exclusion.

Conclusion

This study applied sport as a model to improve young people's well-being and livelihood despite poverty and multiple challenges that make them vulnerable. The literature supported understanding the role of air badminton practice in such a neglected community and its positive impact on young people's health, participation in physical activity, reducing roaming, learning values and acknowledging the essence of formal education. Further, helped unlock quarrelling among parents, and offered young people the chance to have fun and socialise. Aside from the male parents' absence, mothers and the community people were very excited to see their children, teens and young people practising a new sport in their community.

Notes

1. Eguaboano falls within the hard-core poor, child neglect, school dropouts and illiteracy as identified by the Winneba Municipal Assembly in their report of 2014-2017 (see, p.27).

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