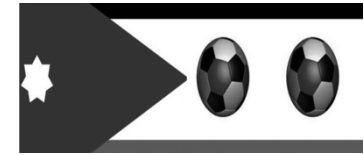




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# Soccer for Peace and Understanding Program: Evaluation of Coaching Workshops

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## Abstract

**Background/Purpose:** The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport has deemed sport is a useful tool in programs fostering development and peace (UN, n.d.). These types of programs have been anecdotally shown to foster an improved sense of trust, a sense of community among diverse individuals, and/or prosocial behaviors (e.g., Wells et al., 2005), but they are rarely systematically studied (Spaaij, 2009); therefore, this study evaluated four areas (i.e., participant satisfaction, knowledge, mutual understanding, and application) of Phase I of a soccer for peace and understanding training program in Jordan.

**Method:** Three two-day workshops were conducted with 56 male and female Jordanian youth soccer coaches using a "train the trainer" approach designed to educate coaches how to integrate soccer skills with techniques to build citizenship and peaceful living. Participants completed a knowledge and mutual understanding assessment prior to the workshop and again upon completion along with a satisfaction and application survey.

**Analysis/Results:** Results indicated: a) 100% of coaches were satisfied with the workshop; b) 54% showed increases in soccer-specific knowledge; c) 23% claimed improvement in knowledge about peaceful living skills; d) over 80% reported an increase in a mutual understanding of others; and e) over 90% acquired the ability to integrate citizenship and peaceful living skills through soccer.

**Conclusions:** Overall, Phase I appeared to be effective in achieving most of the stated goals. Future research is needed to further establish the effectiveness of the curriculum.

## Project Overview

- The program consisted of three phases: 1) Phase I involved 2-day workshops for youth soccer coaches in three cities in Jordan; 2) Phase II was a 12-day cultural exchange trip in the U.S. for 10 Jordanian coaches; and 3) Phase III consisted of one 4-day intensive workshop involving 70 coaches from cities throughout north Jordan. Phase I is the focus of this study.
- We partnered with Indiana Soccer Association, Ball State's Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Center for Interfaith Cooperation of Indianapolis, Leaders of Tomorrow (Amman, Jordan), the Jordan Football Association, and Princess Basma Youth Resource Centre (Jordan).
- The overall purpose was to bring soccer coaches together to discuss and ways to use soccer to strengthen the citizenship and leadership behaviors of their athletes and students.
- Phase I Details:
  - U.S. delegation of six members (i.e., soccer coaches, peace experts, conditioning experts) conducted 2-day workshops;
  - Workshops included classroom and field sessions;
  - Session topics included Indiana Soccer Association's Human Development curriculum, peaceful living skills, technical and tactical soccer information, and fitness testing.
  - The afternoon of the second day involved an athletes' clinic.

## Methods

### Participants

- Coaches:** 60 participated in the workshops, with 50 completing all measurements. The majority of the coaches were male ( $N = 37$ ), mean age 35.78 ( $SD = 8.77$ ). The female coaches ( $N = 13$ ), mean age of 27.23 ( $SD = 7.80$ ). The majority were Arab (85.7%,  $N = 48$ ), and Jordanian (89.3%,  $N = 50$ ). The mean number of years coaching was 7.21 ( $SD = 6.98$ ).
- Youth:** The total number of athletes (youth) was 123, with approximately 100 completing all measures. The majority of youth athletes were Arab (64.2%,  $N = 79$ ) and Jordanian (54.5%,  $N = 67$ ). Of those who reported gender, 77.2% ( $N = 61$ ) were male, and 22.8% ( $N = 18$ ) were female.

### Instruments

- Pre- and post-test measures created to assess coach and youth knowledge gains, and perceived efficiency, effectiveness, and overall satisfaction with their workshop experience. These measures included application questions regarding peaceful living skills, incorporating peaceful living skills into lessons both on and off the soccer field, and different methods to coach technical and tactical soccer skills.
- Pre- and post-test measures also had items related to mutual understanding using an adapted version of Bogardus' Social Distance Scale.

### Procedures

- IRB approval obtained and instruments translated to Arabic prior to distribution.
- The coaches received a pre-test on the first day prior to instruction and a post-test along with a self-report survey at the conclusion of second day.
- The athletes received a pre-test prior to their formal instruction and a post-test with a self-report survey at the end of the two-hour training session.



## Results

### Satisfaction

- Coaches were satisfied overall with workshop,  $M = 3.73$  (possible range 1-4,  $SD = 0.45$ ), with high satisfaction on instruction of good citizenship behavior ( $M = 3.73$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ) and peaceful living skills ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ).
- Youth liked the workshop also ( $M = 3.68$ , possible range 1 - 4,  $SD = 0.57$ ).

### Knowledge

- Coaches showed improvements on the post-test for overall, soccer, and peaceful living skills knowledge. However, results of a post-hoc power test indicate that, only the pre/post comparisons of the *overall* knowledge and *soccer* ( $1-\beta = .980$  and  $1-\beta = .983$ , respectively) maintained sufficient power to consider these comparisons robust.
- Youth did not show an improvement from pre to post.

### Mutual Understanding

- Coaches scores did not significantly improve from pre- post, but all of the social distance statements were rated higher than a best practice cutoff score of 2.5, and each item's respective mean did increase at the time of the post-test

### Future Application

- 98% coaches feel prepared to develop players into good citizens through soccer, ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ ) and 100% felt prepared to encourage peaceful living skills, ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ).
- 100% coaches feel prepared to develop players into good citizens through soccer, ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ) and 98% felt prepared to encourage peaceful living skills, ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ).

## Conclusions

- Overall Phase I was considered successful with participants reporting satisfaction with the workshop, knowledge gained, increase in mutual understanding, and confidence in the ability to employ the skills taught in the workshop.
- Results matched between the level of coverage of a workshop topic and reported level of understanding and confidence to use in the future.
- Results did indicate that the two content areas of soccer and peaceful living skills were not as clearly integrated as needed.
- Athlete session may not have been long enough to see knowledge gain.
- Sessions that were active and involved participants were preferred.
- The format where the coaches ran sessions with athletes to practice skills learned was a successful method, especially to help with the language challenges.
- Challenges included translation of measurements, use of likert type questions with this sample, and limited time to complete assessments.
- Future workshop curriculum should include examples of conflict resolution specifically within the soccer / coaching context.
- Qualitative methodologies might be a good way to evaluate program effectiveness as well.

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