

Implications for Olympic education and training through Olympism in Africa



1. Introduction

Modern Olympism was re-discovered by Pierre de Coubertin and his colleagues in the International Olympic Committee in 1894.

Africa then as a continent, and Uganda in particular was not well-known to Europe and „the world“ of the day. Africa was a dark and obscure continent whose sporting potential, let alone cultural activities, values and beliefs were not known to de Coubertin and associates. Africa, however, despite being unknown, had its own indigenous sporting activities, values and systems which were valued and conserved, developed and transmitted through generations.

Olympism did not come to Africa on its own during the 20th century, and thus could not have had its own separate agenda for Africa. Rather, Olympism was introduced or „blown“ to Africa through certain influential forces and winds of change that have remotely endeavored to transform and continue to influence developments in Africa. Today, Africa has its own values, problems, needs, goals, and aspirations and is trying to evolve an independent way of solving its problems and meeting its needs and challenges at a pace more determined by itself.

2. Berlin Conference and winds of Change in Africa

The Berlin Conference of 1885 marks a significant landmark for most of the changes in African development in the 20th century. These changes include: partition, trade, exploration, missionary work, adventure, conquest/ occupation, colonization, European education, first and second World Wars, pan-Africanism, independence movements

and liberation struggles, neo-colonialism, science and technology evolution/transfer, cold war, coups and African dictatorships.

Most of these winds of change except for pan-Africanism independence movements and liberation struggles, coup d'états and dictatorships are exogenous influences. Yet it is mainly the exogenous, rather than the endogenous influences that have planted, watered and nurtured Olympism in Africa. It is difficult to isolate the growth of Olympism in Africa from the exogenous winds of change. These winds have prompted other African developments in the 20th century that have engineered transformations in the administrative political, ideological, economic, social and cultural areas

These developments can be phased into seven distinct historical stages; (1) pre-partition (2) partition and scramble (3) colonization and missionary work (4) world wars and post world wars (5) liberation struggles and independence movements (6) neo-colonialism and post-independence, (7) dictatorships and democratic disaster.

The advent of the 21st century brings with it a new important, challenging and decisive era for Africa-indigenous African Renaissance. It is thus important to recognize that the Africa of today is no longer the Africa of the 19th century and the Africa of the 21st century will not be the Africa of the 20th.

Through the various winds of change and forces of transformation, the face of Africa has changed politically, socially and economically. In so far as Europe is no longer directly responsible for independent Africa there are residual elements of external winds of change that strongly govern the future of Africa and its development. The development of Olympism in Africa may be influenced by such residual elements in the 21st century. It may not only be the power of politics or democracy alone but the power of science, ideology and technology that will influence Africa. Who rules, makes science and technology; who markets and controls science and technology in Africa is the one who is going to rule and influence Africa and Olympism in Africa in the 21st century.

These winds of change have important implications for the growth and development of Olympism in Africa. Those involved in promoting Olympism in Africa should be aware of this. Today, Africa is in a constant state of transformation to the extent that there is nothing African on the ground in Africa, in terms of culture, politics, administration, social structure and economy, but mixtures of copy types and models of European, American, and Asian influences. These are the factors by which Africa was run in the 20th century and which might have an effect on the future. It is important for Olympism to know the past and present state of affairs in Africa, if it intends to have a home and future in Africa.

3. Olympism and African Sports Values

Knowing African history, politics and economics is not enough basis for the promotion of Olympism in Africa. It is very important to recognize and appreciate the value system of Africa. Prior to partition, colonization, missionary work, European education, and political administration at the end of the 19th century, Africa had its own traditional sports activities and values. Although most traditional sports activities may be extinct or look obsolete there are specific and technological threats for modern Olympism in the 21st century. African values especially should be recognized and used in the promotion of Olympism in the 21st century. After all, Olympism and Olympic education greatly focus not only on the education of knowledge and skills, but also on the cultivation of the right sports values and attitudes in our people especially the young and the youth. Africa, as a continent is too wide and diverse to say that nations, let alone tribes, should have the same traditional values and attitudes toward sports. Different societies within Africa have different values for sports, but certain qualities can be identified to cut across these values. The example below shows how traditional values of spirit in Uganda may have a link to de Coubertin's values of Olympism, and modern values.

<i>Traditional values of sport in Uganda/Africa</i>	<i>Values of de Coubertin's Olympism</i>	<i>Modern values and ideals of Olympism</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education of Youth and Children 2. Developing and maintenance of social conformity and harmony. 3. Developing and enhancing social identity among the tribe. 4. Provision of leisure, recreation and entertainment. 5. Maintenance of defense and internal security. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Religion 2. Beauty 3. Peace 4. Harmonious Development of Man 5. Improvement of Man 6. Excellence 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health 2. Knowledge and understanding of Olympic ideals 3. Athletic Qualities (Citius, Fortius, Altius) 4. Personal Qualities 5. Moral Qualities e.g. fair play, fairness, character, honesty 6. Competitiveness 7. Social conformity and involvement 8. Ethical behavior 9. Educational and cultural transmission 10. Responsibility and decision making 11. Unity of mankind/ friendship 12. World peace 13. Sports festival

Tab.1: Comparison of African Values and Olympic Values
Source: Byaruhanga (1988) / Don Anthony et al (1986) / IOC Charter (1985)

African values seem to have a place in modern Olympism. Olympic Education in Africa should therefore expect the challenge of learning to cope with changing ideals and values of Olympism and sport. Olympic Education in Africa should expect to change by means of improving goals, ideals and structure of Olympism as well as changing social, political, moral and economic values in Africa. Olympic Education in Africa in the 21st century will have to face the challenge of developing a clear conceptual understanding of Olympism. There are many in Africa who seem to equate Olympism to participation in Olympic Games and where the ultimate goal for African countries is to earn medals. Olympism and Olympic Education in Africa in the 21st century should focus beyond training, participation and winning in the Olympic Games. More than knowledge and skills about Olympics and sport is required. Olympic Education in the 21st century should, as a form of universal education, essentially embrace all those aspects of learning and instructing related to the acquisition and practice of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes related to Olympism. This challenge is re-echoed in the words of Pierre de Coubertin himself: *„Why did I restore the Olympic Games?“ „To enable and strengthen sports, to ensure their independence and duration and thus enable them better fulfill the educational role incumbent upon them in the modern world for the glorification of the individual athlete whose muscular activities is necessary for the maintenance of the general spirit of competition“.*

Thus Olympism goes beyond Olympic Games. Olympic Education should not look at Olympic Games as an end, but as an ever-growing and far reaching system of activities, values, knowledge, skills and attitudes extending beyond Olympic Games.

4. Olympism and „Modern Values“ in Africa

It is notable that the concept of modernity is relative. Modernity changes with time. What was modern yesterday is obsolete and irrelevant today and what is modern today will be backward and sub-standard tomorrow. Time, competition and change tend to override modernity. Society is always demanding change, adopting and adapting changes. So should Africa and Olympism.

Olympism, though lacking a proper definition, seems to represent *„that global system of educational values, beliefs, principles and practices initially developed by Pierre de Coubertin and associates that focuses on the educational belief that creation of a system of highly competitive sport that could inspire and invigorate the youth and shake them out of lethargy, inspire them together to pursue excellence and build an international movement which would contribute to the peaceful resolution of international conflict“.*

The continent of Africa is one of the regions of the world with the most sporadic changes in the system of values, beliefs, principles and practices. As an antidote to development, Africa must therefore be able to identify and choose objectively for itself the right choice of values that should help it to develop. Olympism could contribute some of these essential values. But whose business is it in the first place to develop and market Olympism in Africa?

It is the responsibility of National Olympic Committees (NOC's). First and foremost, Olympic Education should be the responsibility of NOCs in Africa which must conceive, initiate and implement Olympic Education programs in their own countries and the continent as a whole. Unfortunately, however, the capacity of most African NOCs to do this leaves a lot to be desired. There is a need that African NOCs should be empowered in this respect.

5. Sport, Olympism and African Problems

<i>African Problems</i>	<i>Issues in the World of Sport and Olympism</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poor Leadership 2. Insecurity/War 3. Poverty 4. Ignorance/Illiteracy 5. Disease 6. Hunger 7. Lack of capital 8. Lack of entrepreneurialism 9. Lack of regional integration 10. Lack of democracy/constitutionalism 11. Poor governance 12. Economic overdependence 13. Poor political, social and economic structures 14. Disrespect/Disregard for human rights 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government involvement/support 2. Media in Olympism 3. Professionalism vs. Amateurism 4. Sport/PE and Olympic Education in schools, colleges and universities 5. Coaches 6. Athletes 7. Sports leaders/managers 8. Ethics/fairplay 9. Development of sport structures 10. Aid and technical assistance in sport 11. Facilities and equipment 12. Sports for girls and women 13. Mass participation and mobilization 14. Technology and sport 15. Sport and environment 16. Sport and law 17. Sport and politics 18. Sport and economy 19. Sport and religion
<i>Problems of Olympism and Top Level Sport</i>	<i>Possible significance of Olympism of Africa</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abuse of sport for political ends 2. Business interest in sport 3. Questionable media interests 4. Public expectations of improved performance 5. Threats to health of athletes 6. Lack of ethics, fairplay, drugs, violence 7. Material expenses for training and competition 8. Participation by children/juniors 9. Institutionalization and bureaucratization of sport organizations 10. Influence of science and technology 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unity (Pan-Africanism) 2. Peaceful co-existence 3. Friendship/goodwill 4. Diplomacy/foreign policy 5. Ideological transfer/ transformation 6. Prestige (National, continental, international) 7. Political protest/boycotts 8. Conflict and rivalry of nations 9. Competition 10. International business opportunities 11. Technology acquisition/transfer/ transformation 12. Facilities and equipment 13. Publicity/image 14. Anti-racial struggle

Tab.2: The Relationship between African Problems and Olympism in Africa

To be able to develop sport, Olympism, and hence, Olympic Education in Africa require special knowledge and understanding of the African social, political and economic context. Knowledge of Africa's problems, needs, hopes and aspirations of the 21st century are important. How do these relate to sport, Olympism, the world and the future of Africa? Does Olympism and Olympic Education have relevance in the African context? The table below, as

a theoretical model, attempts to identify, analyze and relate Olympism to African problems and world issues in Olympism. It attempts to predict the likely significance of sport and Olympism to Africa in the 21st century.

6. Obstacles of Sport in the World vis à vis Problems of Sport in Africa

Olympic Education in Africa should not be further regarded outside the context of sport in the world and the context of sport in Africa. Both contexts should be considered critically. There are some world problems in sport to which Africa has to respond and be sensitive, despite the latter apparent lag in top level sport. In Olympism, Africa's role is no longer a matter of participation, but rather of active involvement. In the Olympics, it is no longer a matter of competing but rather being able to compete and win. Notably, while most world problems of sport are problems of „excellence“ and „over-efficiency“ in sport, Africa's problems are uniquely different. These are problems of 'deficiency' in the sport systems. Thus the challenge for Olympism in Europe and America is not the same as the challenge for Africa. While Europe and America's challenge is how to maintain the lead, Africa's challenge is how to overcome the disadvantage

<i>„Excellence“ problems of sport in the world</i>		<i>„Deficiency“ problems of sport in Africa</i>
Abuse of sport for political ends	↔	Lack of informal awareness of political and economic significance of sport
Business interests in sport	↔	Lack of business opportunities in sport
Expectations of public for even greater levels of performance	↔	Continued poor performances in sport
Growing threats to health of athletes	↔	Inadequacies in nutrition and health, welfare of African Athletes
Material expense for training and competition	↔	Lack of financial and material base for expense on sport
Participation by children/juniors in competitive sport	↔	Inadequate and unsystematic participation of children in PE/Sport
High pressure for competitive training on children in preparation for setting records	↔	Lack of appropriate competition and training for junior athletes
Institutionalisation and bureaucracy in sport organisations	↔	Lack of national and grassroots systems and institutions for sport promotion
Growing influence of science and technology on sport	↔	Lack of science and technology in African sport

Tab.3: Comparison between Excellence Problems and Deficiency. Problems in Olympism and Sport in Africa

and possibly assume the lead. The table below illustrates the contrasting challenges.

In addition, Africa has an endless list of sport developmental problems which are non-existent in Europe or America, namely:

- Poor transport and communication within and between states.
- Territorial and geographical barriers.
- Linguistic barriers i.e. lack of a common language for sport communication or lack of access to another language (see Africa's linguistic zones)
- Inadequacy or resignation of top level technical personnel capable of designing and implementing national sports development programmes.
- Poor and incompetent sports leadership
- Absence of local grassroots sports facilities and organisations
- Lack of universal PE/Sport programmes in school, communities, colleges and universities
- Localisation of sport in urban centres at the expense of rural areas.
- Imbalance between programmes developed and financial resources to implement and sustain them.
- General lack of policy and national long-term plan for development of sports.

- Regular conflicts between governments and sport.
- Financial gaps between earnings of professional and amateur sportsmen.
- Unstable and non-professional sports federations.
- Insufficient media coverage of big athletic events and lack of contact with, or interest from sponsors or lack of a pool of sponsors.
- Absence of sport science, sports medical, sport-biomechanical facilities, services and networks.
- Poor clubs or clubs of poor financial standing often poorly managed.
- Lack of technical know-how in highly technical events/sports.
- Lack of target-focused sports development policies, plans, programmes in most African countries.

7. Olympism, Governance and Education in Africa

There is one primary factor that seems to govern the future of Africa. That is the subject of good leadership and the quality of governance which is paramount in the future stability of the continent. The greatest part of Africa's problems of the 19th and 20th century have been a direct result of lack of vision and incapacity of leaders and rulers. It is thus unrealistic and unhealthy for Olympism to ignore the role of good leadership and interests of governments in Olympism and sport in the 21st century.

African governments have invariably used sport from the 1960s to the 1990s to:

- Symbolise winning, competition (and national superiority and sometimes displaced inferiority complex).
- Acquire prestige, heroism, hero worship, and national immortalisation of excellence.
- Educate youth and entertain citizens
- Acquire military goals
- Symbolise and develop nationalism/patriotism
- Promote African unity/Pan-Africanism
- Promote peace, goodwill and international understanding
- Promote social integration, cultural expression and socialisation
- To feature political protest, diplomacy and foreign policy
- Gain opportunity for political interference/intervention with sport
- Maintain social and public order through excitement
- Provide a medium for expenditure and investment in human resources etc.

Most African governments have found a cause to be interested in sport in general and Olympism in particular. African governments also command an overwhelming influence over sport and educational activities in their countries mainly because of the unique financial position they command in a sea of poverty. Such governments therefore often claim a stake in Olympism not for the sake of promoting the cause and goals of Olympism but more for the unique prestigious opportunity associated with attending Olympics and winning medals at championships where their national flags are involved. Other aspects of Olympism such as peace, excellence, beauty, and fairplay are often obscured to governments by the obsession to win. Most African governments, erroneously seem to believe they own olympic teams and olympic activities of their NOC's because they are the main financiers. The issue of most African NOC's, not being self-sufficient and relying greatly on support by national governments to finance their activities, is a cause for concern in the future development of Olympism.

Further, it should be recognised that in most African countries, since independence, national governments are the key financiers of most forms of education and sports in their states. They are also key law-makers, policy-makers and implementers of both, education and sports programmes. National governments also own and monopolise

the media. It is thus absolutely necessary to have good relations between sport/Olympism and governments in order for Olympic Education to prosper in Africa in the 21st century.

8. Past Achievements of Sport and Olympism in Africa

The future is often built on the past and present. In this context, it is important to reflect on the past and present achievements of sport and Olympism in Africa in order to forecast the future. Despite numerous problems, Africa, in the last century, has made some notable achievements, namely:

- the creation of National Olympic Committees in all independent African states.
- the creation of ANOCA - Association of National Olympic Committee of Africa on 22nd June 1983 in Lome, Togo.
- the formation of the supreme council for sport in Africa (1968) and the creation of sports federations and the union of African sports confederations.
- the creation of a continental zonal structure to support sports.
- Regular and continued holding and hosting of the All-Africa games since Brazzaville 1965.
- Holding regular continental and regional championships and inter-club continental championships in some sports.
- Initiation of youth development programmes in various sports.
- Introduction, nurture and growth of new international/Olympic sports discipline in African countries after independence.
- Improved quality of African performances in Olympic competitions, world cups and championships.
- Development of high quality human resources in sports and the creation of some specialised national training institutions and facilities for sport and regional development centres.
- Co-operation and participation in North-South, African-American, African-Asian sports programmes plus other programmes such as the Francophone games, commonwealth games, Islamic games etc.
- Harmonisation of training programmes for coaches, technical officials and sports administrators.
- Strengthening of African influence in the international sport arena and increased collective continental bargaining in world sport.
- Participation in the fight against racism and racial discrimination in sport and the struggle towards equality and social justice in sport.
- Development of a spirit of continental unity through sport.
- Development of competitive sport infrastructure and stadiums largely with technical assistance from Germany, and China.
- Successful hosting of the Rugby world cup in South Africa in 1995.

It is noteworthy to recognise that most of these achievements have been attained with the positive co-operation and support from national governments and leaders.

9. Facing Future Challenges of World Sport and Olympism in Africa in the 21st Century

From this background, Africa of the 21st century wants to embrace the challenge of Olympism and top-level competitive sport, to reach the top to remain or emerge as winners in world sport, keep the show and remain in the

arena. Africa wants to be a winner rather than a mere participant or spectator. It is thus important to identify what factors are likely to influence future development of sport in the 21st century. A model adopted from Digel (1985) serves to summarise the scope of future challenge to sport and Olympism in Africa. This challenge comprises of many factors, sports specific and non-specific.

<i>Sport Specific Challenges</i>	<i>General Challenges</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of new athletes • Development of top coaches • Development of full-time officials • Sports facilities • Spectators • Sports media • Sports sponsors • Patrons • State/government support • Sport science • Sport technology • Sport consumption • Athletic support by patrons • Assistance for sports facilities • Sport ethics • Sports rules and standards • Systems of competition • Clubs and associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demography (population factors) • Labour and market conditions/ employment • Leisure time • Public and economic resources • Income and distribution of incomes • Cycles of life and situation of families • Living and transport conditions • Urban rural development • Environmental conservation • Public health • Mass media • Education • Impact of political participation • Situation of youth in society • Trends in leisure and recreational activities • Recreational consumption • Entertainment needs • Political developments • Peace • Economic stability

Tab.4: Sport Specific and General Challenges of Sport and Olympism in Africa (Adapted from Digel 1995)

10. The Prospects of modern sport and Olympism in Africa

10.1 Modernisation of Sport in Africa

In view of these challenges what then are the prospects of modern sport and Olympism in Africa? What goals does, or should the future hold for Olympism and sport in Africa? And what should be the focus of future development? The focus for development should be modernisation of African sport by introducing specific changes in some of the areas below.

Top level sport in Africa in the 21st century

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic developments • Trends in recreational activities • Recreational consumption • Sport consumption • Media in sport • Entertainment needs • Political developments • Peace • Economic stability • Athletes and athletes' welfare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support by sponsors and patrons • State legislation for sport • State assistance for sport • Sports facilities and equipment • Sport ethics • Sport rules and standards • System of competition • Clubs and associations • Sport science • Sports technology • Coaches • Direct and indirect spectators
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African sports achievements in 20 th century	
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Sports heritage of Africa before 20 th century	

Tab.5: Factors contributing to Modernisation of Sport in Africa (Adapted from H. Digel 1995)

10.2 Implications for Olympic Education and Training for Sport in Africa

But what are the implications of modernisation of African sport for the future of Olympism and Olympic Education in Africa?

It means that Olympic Education and training for sport in Africa in the future must address itself as a solution to the problems and challenges identified before; and as a service on the way forward for sport. Rather than creating awareness through Olympism, Africa needs new Olympic Education programmes which must focus on improving the capacities of African sport to acquire the necessary leadership skills for involving the business sector, acquiring administrative, organisational skills, improving cordial state involvement, developing and promoting ethics, developing and empowering clubs and associations, development of coaches, developing empowering, enlightening and protecting athletes, etc. as shown above.

The future scope of operation of Olympic Education in Africa is deep and wide. African needs Olympic Education programmes not only in order to meet the ever increasing challenges of Olympism, olympic performance standards, but also education that enables it to cope with the problems, values, setup and needs of the African situation. The new programmes thus call for diversification. The figure below attempts to identify the scope of concerns for future education and training in Africa.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage spontaneity of Sport among youth - sport for all youth in Africa. • Development of services and education to athlete coach and manager. • Exchange and sharing of information and experience. • Development of women and sport and sport among African women. • Brighton + Beijing Declaration and Sport • Training and higher training of sports leaders, teachers, managers and policy makers. • Training of volunteers. • Training of sport journalists and establishment of a sport journalist information system. • Establishment of Permanent training camps for elite and promising African athletes or scholarships. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonisation and networking of African sports programs and expertise. • Resource generation strategies for sport. • Sports medicine and biomechanics training program • Cooperation, coordination of development activities. • Strengthening school PE/Sports and junior development programmes. • Sports human resources development master plan to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technicians - Researchers - Administrators - Scientists - Coaches • Sports training and Research in medicine and Biomechanics. • Development of sports law. • Sports investment promotion. |
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Tab.6: Future Concerns for Olympic Education in Africa

Conclusion

Olympism is still not well known, understood and experienced in Africa. Thus Africa needs Olympic Education to ensure the full realisation of the true universal fraternity. The African dream of the 21st century is to host the Olympics and to be fully involved in Olympism as a full participant and preferably as a winner and equal but not as an underdog or loser. Olympism in the 21st century Africa requires more goodwill commitment, resources, leadership, vision, economic management, science and education. Yet these are factors which are in short supply in Africa. Thus does Olympism have a future in Africa? And does Africa have a future in Olympism?

The obvious answer to both questions is „Yes“. We both need each other and have to work with each other as partners provided we understand the context in which both Olympism and sport in Africa operate and try to seek solutions which fit in this context.

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Résumé

Signification passée de l'olympisme pour l'éducation olympique et l'entraînement en Afrique.

Aujourd'hui encore l'olympisme n'est toujours que peu connu et répandu en Afrique. L'auteur débute en décrivant le développement politique du pays pour expliquer que les changements qui s'y produisent sont en général suscités

par des facteurs exogènes. Ces influences venues de l'extérieur amenèrent des changements non seulement dans le domaine politique et social, mais aussi dans la diffusion du mouvement olympique. L'éducation olympique reste pourtant la seule mission de C.O.N. même si cela dépasse actuellement les possibilités momentanées.

L'auteur fait le rapport entre les problèmes généraux du pays et ceux du sport sur le plan mondial. Il compare les problèmes du monde du sport à ceux du sport en Afrique pour expliquer que dans l'éducation olympique on doit se rendre et tenir compte des dessous politiques, sociaux et économiques du pays ainsi que des rapports qu'il y a entre tous ces domaines. Il explique ensuite l'attitude ambiguë des gouvernements africains envers l'olympisme. A la fin de son exposé, il présente les progrès fait dans la voie de l'olympisme. Il présente aussi le défi en général, mais aussi sur le plan sportif pour l'avenir de l'Afrique. Selon l'auteur de cet exposé l'Afrique a besoin de programmes éducatifs olympiques non seulement pour faire face au défi olympique mais bien plus d'une éducation qui tient compte des problèmes et des nécessités du pays.