

From the Field

CrossFit partner work: Strength building for SDP

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ABSTRACT

This article provides recommendations for Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) practitioners focused on improving participants' livelihoods. Practitioners should consider developing programs specifically for previously incarcerated persons that utilize CrossFit or similar fitness-based methods with thoughtful partnerships. Though returning citizens have complicated challenges reentering the job market, fitness-based programs may offer employment opportunities. CrossFit is large, growing, and has low barriers to entry. It supplies the additional benefits of physical activity, a supportive community, and the ability to be replicated easily in different contexts. Grounded in the example of UliftU in Pennsylvania, USA, and its partners, this article highlights an unexplored avenue for SDP programs. The article identifies lessons learned concerning client populations and partnerships and suggests avenues for further study.

Authors' Statement

The landscape of the fitness industry, and specifically the CrossFit brand, has changed significantly since we wrote this piece in Fall 2019 and it was accepted for publication. As with all research, conclusions must evolve with changing circumstances.

We strongly believe that the fitness industry has the power—

and opportunity—to be a catalyst for social change. We also believe that sport-for-livelihood programs like UliftU, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering incarcerated men, should be replicated. However, the CrossFit brand is not the best or only option through which to do so—especially in light of recent events.

In early June 2020, Greg Glassman, founder of CrossFit, made racist remarks and circulated conspiracy theories. Former employees also revealed allegations of sexual harassment. Several high-ranking CrossFit executives resigned shortly thereafter, and hundreds of gyms disaffiliated from the CrossFit brand. While grateful for previous support, UliftU immediately denounced Glassman and cut ties with the CrossFit brand.

We believe that the methodology of CrossFit still works. Former CrossFit affiliates can provide that benefit without the name or logo. UliftU will continue training men to be exceptional fitness coaches both during and after their time in prison but will explore certifications through other organizations.

In late June 2020, CrossFit announced the sale of the brand to Eric Roza, who will become the new CEO. We must wait and see if this move sufficiently addresses CrossFit's issues and takes the brand in a new direction. Meanwhile, Wylie Belasik, founder of UliftU and one of the authors of this article, is collaborating with a group of former affiliate

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owners to fill the leadership void. These gyms and nonprofits whose missions have always been inclusive will support former affiliates with resources and action steps to create programs that can truly enact social change.

Find Belasik's full statement here:

<https://subversusfitness.com/leaving-crossfit/>

For more information on the new direction, check out www.trainanybody.com and www.uliftu.org/

INTRODUCTION

Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) programs focused on improving participants' livelihoods can learn from the example of UliftU, a program in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This program, which partners with the CrossFit Foundation, for-profit CrossFit Subversus (CFS), an adult education expert, and the American federal court system, creates career opportunities for previously incarcerated men. CrossFit gyms provide low barriers to entry (Ozanian, 2015), a sense of community (Maslic, 2019), and physical activity (Glassman, 2004). These characteristics serve citizens returning from prison well as they face complicated challenges reentering the workforce. This article analyzes UliftU and its partnerships, identifies lessons that SDP programs can apply, and recommends avenues of future exploration.

DISCUSSION

Why SDP for the Previously Incarcerated?

Spaaij (2009) recommended SDP practitioners individually tailor their programs to meet the needs of local problems and orient toward different social groups within disadvantaged neighborhoods. SDP-for-livelihood practitioners should create programs to serve previously incarcerated persons in their local area because returning citizens confront unique challenges in employment.

Researchers estimate between 14 million and 15.8 million people have felony convictions in the United States, which significantly adversely affects a person's employment prospects (Bucknor & Barber, 2016). Time in prison produces a stigma attached to a criminal record, erodes basic job skills, disrupts formal education, and causes the loss of social networks that could improve job-finding prospects (Bucknor & Barber, 2016). Many government jobs and licensed professions lock out persons with felony convictions (Bucknor & Barber, 2016). Fitness industry jobs, particularly those as personal training entrepreneurs or

in affiliate models like CrossFit, do not erect the same barriers.

Returning citizens may possess a variety of characteristics that limit their employability and earning capacities, including limited education and cognitive skills, limited work experience, substance abuse, and other physical and mental health problems (Holzer et al., 2003). Even where little formal skill is required, employers seek essential "job readiness," expecting that the employee will show up consistently and punctually, work hard and take some responsibility, and be generally trustworthy (Holzer et al., 2003). Employer prejudice impacts hiring and retention of workers, and employers display more aversion to hiring returning citizens than any other disadvantaged group. (Holzer et al., 2003).

Education and training can help prepare returning citizens for the workforce and meet the particular skill needs that employers seek (Holzer et al., 2003). Transitional work experiences should not only provide some general work-readiness skills but also signal to employers the individual's ability to hold a job and meet basic standards of responsibility (Holzer et al., 2003). Programs combining a variety of other aids might help reduce the isolation and alienation from the world of work that many ex-offenders feel (Holzer et al., 2003). SDP-for-livelihood programs training returning citizens to be CrossFit coaches meet these criteria, providing education and certification, signaling work-readiness skills, and establishing a stable community and sense of belonging.

Why CrossFit?

In an overview of SDP programs, Svensson and Woods (2017) found organizations most commonly employed football, basketball, and rugby. They did not identify any program explicitly classified as a fitness or strength and conditioning program. They noted the current state of SDP practice narrowly defines sport. This indicates SDP programs have not yet explored utilizing strength and conditioning programs.

Physical Activity Benefits

Careers as CrossFit instructors lead to increased levels of physical activity compared to sedentary jobs, and physical activity can generate broad-ranging wellness improvements (Calderwood et al., 2016) far beyond having employment. These gains can multiply the valuable effects of employment education for participants, increasing the chance of attaining long-term employment. Calderwood et al. (2016) reviewed physical activity literature, synthesized

the myriad benefits, and explained the connection to positive employment outcomes. Physical activity yields health and well-being enhancements by triggering antidepressant hormones and increasing endorphin secretion, which may allow employees to experience their work more positively through improvements in physiological health (Calderwood, et al., 2016). Physical activity may distract individuals from depressing or negative thoughts and improve mood, which may yield well-being and performance enhancements (Calderwood et al., 2016). Physical activity may also relate positively to mastery experiences, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and body image (Calderwood et al., 2016). Participants receiving these improved physiological, psychological, and cognitive outcomes would make an SDP-for-livelihood vocational training program even more likely to succeed.

CrossFit Characteristics

CrossFit, a strength and conditioning program, aligns remarkably well with SDP-for-livelihood programs. Maslic (2019) noted CrossFit's potential for SDP had not been fully explored. He analyzed CrossFit from the Sport for Peace perspective, finding CrossFit did have the ability to build a community that challenged dominant ethnonational narratives in a postviolence context (Maslic, 2019). CrossFit's entrepreneurial nature, low barriers to entry, high growth, adaptability, and focus on community make it an excellent vehicle for SDP for livelihood programs looking to move participants into employment.

CrossFit, both a fitness regimen and a company, emphasizes constantly varied, functional movement performed at high intensities (Glassman, 2004). CrossFit, founded in 2002, doubled its revenue every 18 months until 2012 (Fischbach, 2012). As of 2014, CrossFit had generated \$4 billion in annual revenue (Ozanian, 2015). By 2016 it had also credentialed more than 80,000 trainers and hosted over a million participants (CrossFit v. NSCA, 2016). By 2018, it had licensed more than 15,000 locations in 162 countries (Henderson, 2018). CrossFit is also increasingly global. In 2018, only approximately a third of newly registered CrossFit affiliates had opened in the United States, and for the first time there were more gyms located outside the United States than inside it (Henderson, 2018). CrossFit recently renewed its focus on combatting chronic disease by launching CrossFit Health and offering training workshops to medical doctors (Belluz, 2018). This initiative is meant to expand CrossFit to a broader market, reaching patients through their health care provider's recommendation (Belluz, 2018). These indicators demonstrate CrossFit is likely to continue its growth and deliver employment potential in the future.

CrossFit offers prospects for budding entrepreneurs that is an avenue for returning citizens locked out of more traditional hiring pathways. CrossFit's business model requires scant capital since it does not require inventory or large staff (Ozanian, 2015). CrossFit holds weekend certification seminars internationally. While tuition is expensive, passing a single standardized test on the last day allows participants to become a Level 1 certified trainer, which permits trainers to teach CrossFit professionally or open a gym (Helm, 2013). Once certified, trainers can find jobs at CrossFit gyms across the globe.

If a trainer wants to open a gym, he or she must pay CrossFit a relatively low annual fee, now \$3,000, to advertise as a CrossFit gym and to teach the methodology (Helm, 2013). CrossFit gyms retain considerable autonomy, setting membership prices, creating workouts, and deciding on what equipment to buy (Sahlberg, 2012). CrossFit gyms appear rudimentary and comprise large open spaces, usually located inside industrial facilities (Maslic, 2019). CrossFit gyms can operate with low overhead costs for warehouse space and minimal capital outlay since the exercise regimen does not require fancy equipment (Sahlberg, 2012). These characteristics allow for a wide range of entrepreneurs to own businesses.

CrossFit's ability to build a strong sense of belonging and community bolsters its potential as a vehicle for SDP for livelihoods (Maslic, 2019). CrossFit classes consist of groups of individuals led by a coach, but each participant can scale the workout to an appropriate intensity level (Maslic, 2019). This adaptability appeals to individuals of varying fitness and ability and allows for the participation of individuals with disabilities and injuries (Maslic, 2019). Classes focus on inclusivity and sustain an egalitarian approach, with gym norms such as all athletes cheering on the others during workouts (Maslic, 2019). CrossFit relies on shared experiences and a common goal to produce an inclusive culture (Bailey et al., 2019). It also allows sustained contact between individuals from diverse demographics and affirms a sense of community that can form social ties (Whiteman-Sandland et al., 2018). This sense of community can establish stability and support in a manner that can assist returning citizens to remain in employment.

The CrossFit Foundation's former executive director, Olivia Leonard, identified an additional characteristic that she finds vital regarding CrossFit as an avenue for social change. She believes that CrossFit is particularly powerful due to its ability to self-replicate: "It's very unique in that people who are involved in CrossFit . . . personally, charitably, socially, there's a huge urge to bring other

people in, and it's very much a community that self-reinforces in that way" (personal communication, March 30, 2020). In a charitable and social sense, CrossFit encourages people when they see change in themselves and in the lives of the people working out next to them (O. Leonard, personal communication, March 30, 2020). This distinguishing feature also makes CrossFit uniquely suited to address the challenges of returning citizens.

Why Partnerships?

SDP-for-livelihoods practitioners utilizing CrossFit will likely possess high levels of expertise in the fitness industry and experience in instructing coaches. However, they may lack a background in confronting the other challenges encountered by returning citizens. Therefore, they should build mutually beneficial partnerships.

Spaaij (2012) explains that SDP programs cannot be isolated from broader institutions. Therefore, practitioners must consider the role of governments, community leaders, and local businesses in these initiatives (Spaaij, 2012). The International Labour Organization highlights the position of sports institutions as lying outside the usual structures that contend with employment issues, recommending the creation and development of joint projects and partnerships (Blanplain & Colucci, 2006).

SDP organizations rely heavily on partnerships for multiple reasons, including securing funding; for assistance in program design, delivery, and implementation; and for monitoring and evaluation (Welty Peachey et al., 2017). External partnerships are often crucial to overall goal achievement, providing the organization with physical, financial, and human resources benefits (Misener & Doherty, 2013). Welty Peachey et al. (2017) found interorganizational partnerships are vital to the accomplishment and sustainability of SDP organizations. Smaller SDP organizations can increase their organizational capacity through leveraging local partnerships (Svensson & Hambrick, 2016). Practitioners find mutually beneficial relationships important for broader structural capacity. They perceive genuine relationships with external partners who understand the value of the SDP agency's work as essential to meeting their goals (Svensson, 2015). SDP organizations collaborate with a broad spectrum of entities, including private corporations, school districts, municipalities, professional sport teams, and other community-based service organizations (Svensson, 2015).

Interorganizational partnerships pose challenges, and many do not succeed despite the advantages they provide (Welty Peachey et al., 2017). Collaborations can bring additional

capacity but also come with opportunity and transaction costs (Svensson et al., 2018). External partnerships may unintentionally result in additional capacity constraints, which subsequently may inhibit an organization from maximizing the benefits of those partnerships (Svensson, 2015). Increasing the number of external relationships consequently requires staff members to allocate more and more time to maintaining these partnerships (Svensson, 2015).

Welty Peachey et al. (2017) recommend SDP organizations prioritize selling the value and impact of sport to potential partners, acquire business acumen, and focus on local partners. Svensson (2015) suggests, "to minimize potential negative or unintended outcomes of external partnerships, SDP leaders ought to be transparent about intended roles and responsibilities from the onset of a partnership" (p. 236). Practitioners must be persistent when relationship building with potential partners in the local community, especially initially (Svensson, 2015).

UliftU

Though a formal research evaluation has not been performed on UliftU, the program demonstrates a small, grassroots attempt to use CrossFit as a tool for livelihoods. SDP practitioners can learn from UliftU's progress and success. In its first few years, which included significant trial and error, UliftU produced three fully certified CrossFit coaches. These formerly incarcerated men are currently making a living as fitness professionals. With the improvements and streamlining of the process, the program anticipates an ability to scale up to 10 successful graduates annually.

History

In the following sections, Wylie Belasik, one of the authors of this article, will share his personal history, thoughts, and experiences from before the founding of UliftU to the present. Belasik, an experienced practitioner in SDP, first used sport as a tool to help others lead successful lives as vice president of programming and the first employee of now nationwide nonprofit, Back on My Feet, an organization dedicated to combating homelessness through running. During his time with Back on My Feet, he became disillusioned. He realized that running worked for building self-esteem, building self-confidence, and improving self-efficacy. However, it didn't seem to matter how good the program was at social efficacy, because participants still couldn't get a job, contribute to their communities, or support themselves, especially those with a criminal history. After leaving Back on My Feet, Belasik worked with

Phoenix Multisport (now The Phoenix), a free, sober, active community that facilitates addiction recovery through participation in sports and fitness activities. His frustrations continued, worrying that the programs were creating a false set of idealistic expectations. He wondered if these types of SDP programs were doing participants a disservice when the individuals committed to a program that they hoped would help them feel better and be supported, but they still would not be able to find employment if they had a criminal record.

Through those early experiences, Belasik determined that SDP should not just use sport as an intervention, but that SDP programs need to use fitness for livelihoods for populations with barriers to employment. In 2015 Belasik began CrossFit and recognized the program's unique potential. CrossFit, when done well, can be more universally accessible than other sports, such as running, and CrossFit emphasizes community. He proposed an idea to the owner of a CrossFit affiliate in Philadelphia. He wanted to start a nonprofit that would use fitness to assist participants to think more clearly and see the results of planning and dedication. He also wanted the nonprofit to serve as a tool for job creation. Belasik later bought the CrossFit affiliate and now operates both the for-profit CrossFit gym and serves as executive director of the nonprofit SDP program.

Initially, UliftU centered on homeless persons and recruited participants through the shelter system. After about 18 months, Belasik realized that individuals in the shelter system were not at a place where they were ready to engage in this type of program. The program was too intensive and too structured for most of the participants to be successful. Educating someone to become a CrossFit coach is a long, time-intensive process requiring stability and commitment. Several early participants quit. Belasik realized that relying on the shelter system for referrals did not lead to recruiting participants who would be most effectively served by the program. He decided to change the mission of the program to focus on a different population that could be better helped through CrossFit.

Program

The program, called UliftU, works both inside a prison and with men once they have been released to acquire CrossFit certifications and coaching experience. UliftU runs a 12-week program at Chester State Correctional Institution introducing CrossFit to currently incarcerated men with the hope that participants might bridge into the UliftU training program after their release. UliftU requires participants to commit to a paid, year-long training program that includes

attending CrossFit classes at the gym and classroom meetings to learn the material for the CrossFit trainer Level 1 certification, as well as completing work around the gym such as cleaning and working at the front desk. As the participants progress through the program, they begin to coach classes themselves.

Partners

STAR program. In late 2017, UliftU connected with the Supervision to Aid Reentry (STAR) program, a federal re-entry court program for Philadelphia residents on supervised release (U.S. Probation Court, n.d.). STAR furnishes intensive supervision and a highly structured support system to those deemed most likely to reoffend (U.S. Probation Court, n.d.). Every two weeks, participants appear as a group before a federal magistrate judge to report on their progress (U.S. Probation Court, n.d.). After participants successfully complete 52 weeks of supervised release, they are eligible for a reduction of their supervised release period up to one year (U.S. Probation Court, n.d.). Referrals from STAR have been fruitful since the participants already have a layer of structure in place, so UliftU's requirements align with their expectations. The participants also have access to a broader range of services to help them manage challenges outside of job training. This partnership proved to be a turning point for the organization, clarifying the mission. UliftU now seeks to empower returning citizens to become leaders in health and fitness.

CrossFit Subversus (CFS). Though CFS, a for-profit affiliate gym, houses UliftU, according to the IRS tax exemption requirements, UliftU "must not be organized or operated for the benefit of private interests" (Internal Revenue Service, n.d.). UliftU's board scrutinizes this relationship carefully to avoid violating those regulations. CFS provides rent-free classroom space for educational sessions and gym space for coaching training to UliftU. CFS allows UliftU participants to take CrossFit classes at no charge.

Belasik uses CFS to create additional economic opportunities for participants. Instead of other CFS coaches or an outside cleaning crew, CFS pays an hourly wage to UliftU participants who work the front desk and clean the gym separately from their program stipend. Additionally, UliftU pays participants while they shadow CFS coaches. This does not benefit CFS economically since UliftU participants are not coaching members or replacing other paid coaches, but rather they are engaging in coaching development. CFS pays UliftU graduates who coach a CFS class on their own. UliftU stores the equipment they use for

community class separately from CFS equipment, so that CFSs member do not use anything UliftU has purchased.

CrossFit HQ and the CrossFit Foundation. The CrossFit Foundation (CFF) acts as the charitable arm of CrossFit, Inc. It supports the work of affiliates and philanthropic organizations that use CrossFit to serve the needs of their diverse communities through the CrossFit Community Health Fund (CrossFit Foundation, 2019b). CFF operates as an independent 501c3 with the primary goal of supporting communities and special groups that are using CrossFit to meet the needs of that individual group (O. Leonard, personal communication, March 30, 2020). CFF provides three avenues of support to nonprofits, including pro bono development consulting, grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000, and free access to CrossFit training opportunities (O. Leonard, personal communication, March 30, 2020). CFF also hosts biannual meetings at which the leadership of charities using CrossFit can network and receive fundraising training and programmatic advice (CrossFit Foundation, 2019a).

Even though CFF's stated priorities focus on youth, veterans, and people in recovery from substance abuse, Leonard explained it is not limited to those issues (personal communication, March 30, 2020). She indicated that CrossFit, Inc. had done work for the incarcerated community before the foundation's involvement, including hosting Level 1 certifications in prisons and publishing a series of articles in the CrossFit journal about CrossFit and the incarcerated (O. Leonard, personal communication, March 30, 2020).

Belasik proactively solicited Greg Glassman, founder of CrossFit; Jeff Cain, former CEO of CrossFit, Inc.; and Olivia Leonard, executive director of CFF at a lobbying event in Washington, D.C., in Fall 2016 (O. Leonard, personal communication, March 30, 2020). CFF invited Belasik to the next CFF meeting to integrate UliftU into the foundation's community of nonprofits. Leonard pointed out that Belasik's spirit of service, passion, and commitment made UliftU a good candidate for CFF support (personal communication, March 30, 2020).

Belasik interprets CrossFit as maintaining partners who use the program to effect change in areas in which the company wants to make an impact. CFF pays for all education costs related to CrossFit certifications for UliftU. Those costs include the Level 1 certification workshop, retests, and online continuing education courses. CFF committed to outfitting UliftU affiliates with equipment when the program opens a new facility. CFF also covers travel costs for Belasik and UliftU participants to participate in

conferences.

CFF assisting nonprofits aligns with CrossFit, Inc.'s inherent business model. CrossFit, Inc. aims to "share essential resources with its community free of cost" (O. Leonard, personal communication, March 30, 2020). CrossFit provides many of the resources it finds important and worthwhile for free online, including daily workout programming and the Level 1 certification training manual. Encouraging people to take what they can from CrossFit and use it to help others will always be an essential aspect of CrossFit (O. Leonard, personal communication, March 30, 2020). Leonard recognizes the obvious positives for the image and brand to have charities partnering with CrossFit. However, Leonard believes that any resulting financial gain would be so small that it does not motivate CrossFit's decision making (O. Leonard, personal communication, March 30, 2020).

Adult education professional. During the first two years, Belasik and Tim Heckman, program director of UliftU, recognized much of the classroom setting vocational training was not working. Therefore, they refined the educational curriculum UliftU used to develop coaches. The curriculum is under constant revision to address issues of accessibility and educational preparedness. The program instituted the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) test, a diagnostic tool used to determine a person's skill level and aptitudes in various areas. Belasik recognized that before they could train participants to pass the CrossFit certification exam, they needed to remediate some educational deficiencies. Belasik brought on an adult education professional to tutor the men in the program in study skills. This partnership has also proven to be a turning point in the development of the organization: the first participant to receive full tutoring was the first to successfully pass the CrossFit Level 1 certification test on his first attempt.

Lessons Learned

Client population. Belasik, whose work with Back on My Feet focused on the homeless population, believes substance abuse and opioids have changed the landscape of the shelter system dramatically. He thinks people in the shelter system now have much more acute substance abuse needs combined with fewer available mental health resources. He observes that shelters have shifted toward adopting a housing first model, which prioritizes shelter over other needs. He thinks Back on My Feet worked because individuals were in shelters for long durations and that longer time frame largely does not exist anymore, as most shelters attempt to get people in some

form of housing within 30 to 60 days.

Though a full exploration of the application of CrossFit to the homeless population is beyond the scope of this article, the literature supports Belasik's experience. In a systematic review of the literature on case management for homeless persons, de Vet and colleagues (2013) noted that in recent years, the focus of policy measures to reduce homelessness changed. Both in the United States and Europe, policy shifted away from the "staircase" approach to rapid rehousing (de Vet et al., 2013). The staircase approach required homeless persons to prove housing readiness while transferring through shelters and transitional housing situations before they become eligible for independent housing (de Vet et al., 2013). Few service initiatives for homeless people focus on employment. Many service providers assume that mental health and addiction problems are long-term conditions not likely to be well enough resolved in the immediate future to enable homeless individuals to become economically self-sufficient (Rosenheck, 2010).

Since a vocational training program like ULiftU requires a long-term commitment and stable schedule, changes to the program are unlikely to compensate for the particular challenges of the homeless population. Belasik believes that currently incarcerated and returning citizens are the correct target population for CrossFit based sport-for-livelihoods programs due to the physical culture and amount of unoccupied time in prison and the additional monitoring of individuals on release. Belasik has found that the incarcerated men interested in participating in ULiftU are familiar with exercise regimens and worked out while in prison. The currently incarcerated men can also dedicate significant time to studying the CrossFit certification materials since they have few other distractions. Once released, as part of the STAR program, a probation officer intensively supervises ULiftU participants (U.S. Probation Court, n.d.). The court and federal probation office assist with education, training, employment, and other needs and impose graduated sanctions when necessary (U.S. Probation Court, n.d.). Alternatively, according to Belasik, participants who start the program while incarcerated develop relationships with program staff. This familiarity ensures they have appropriate support and a stable environment after their release, even though they would not participate in the STAR program. Sport-for-livelihood practitioners wishing to replicate ULiftU should identify populations in their local community with similar characteristics.

Partnerships. Belasik's experience supports Svensson's (2015) conclusion that effective programs must

integrate mutually beneficial partnerships to meet their goals. ULiftU relies on the federal court system for referrals, an adult education specialist for andragogy, the CrossFit Foundation for resources, and a for-profit CrossFit gym for housing the program. SDP practitioners should aggressively pursue reciprocal partnerships such as those used by ULiftU and allocate appropriate resources to manage them effectively.

The partnership with the STAR program crystallized the ULiftU mission and establishes additional structure in participants' lives making it more likely the participants will stay in the program. The STAR program requires employment or enrollment in a training program as an eligibility criterion for participants, which ULiftU offers. The professional adult educator shaped the curriculum and significantly shortened the time it took participants to obtain certification. ULiftU pays hourly wages for sessions at night and on weekends, offering participants extra income.

The CrossFit Foundation provides ULiftU networking access and financial support. In turn, CFF serves its mission to support agencies using the CrossFit methodology to help people. CrossFit Subversus provides ULiftU a facility, infrastructure, and an established system in which to train coaches. CFS receives positive public relations from its association with ULiftU and allows its owner to pursue his passion for using sport for social change. ULiftU also engages participants outside of CrossFit's traditional demographic, making the sport more inclusive. However, as Belasik and Leonard have noted, ULiftU does not provide measurable economic benefits to its partners.

LIMITATIONS

Though an inspiring example, using ULiftU as a model for sport-for-livelihood programs has limitations. The program has not performed a formal evaluation of its services. ULiftU is small and evolving, engaging in significant changes to the population it serves and its approach to vocational training during its first few years. It has a very dedicated founder, who is willing to expend resources of his for-profit business to assist the program. It targets only males, who either are in prison or recently released, and it was not successful with a homeless population. It is situated in the Northeastern United States, an area of the country with a unique culture, which includes access to a progressive federal court program that provides referrals.

FUTURE INQUIRY

These limitations provide many avenues for future study. First, the program could institute a formal evaluation to

assess its success. Observers could provide additional data on participants' career outcomes. Though CrossFit gyms operate globally, attitudes toward incarcerated and returning citizens and the availability of program partners will vary widely by location. Practitioners should consider the replicability of a similar program in other parts of the United States or outside the country. Practitioners could investigate replicability for other populations. Research should identify other groups that could benefit from a CrossFit employment training program, especially its applicability to female incarcerated persons and returning citizens. Since detractors have questioned CrossFit's safety and efficacy (Crockett & Butryn, 2018) and characterized it as a cult (Dawson, 2017), further research also could explore the use of fitness industry businesses other than CrossFit.

CONCLUSION

We argue Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) practitioners focused on improving participants' livelihoods should develop programs utilizing CrossFit or similar methods with thoughtful partnerships. Though citizens released from prison have complicated challenges reentering the job market, fitness-based programs may offer employment opportunities. CrossFit, though not the only pathway through which SDP for livelihoods partners can achieve their objectives, is large, growing, and has low barriers to entry. It supplies the additional benefits of physical activity, a supportive community, and the ability to be replicated easily in different contexts. We described an example of a current program in this space that revealed lessons learned and considerations for programs moving forward.

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