

# THE SEED PROJECT: PROMOTING EDUCATION THROUGH SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT IN SENEGAL

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this research is to highlight how an education program in Senegal, Africa – the SEED Project (Sport, Education & Economic Development) -- advanced educational and economic outcomes for youth by utilizing a form of Sport for Development (SFD). The paper begins with a description of the history of SEED and its various programs which combine sports with education. We examine SEED through the lens of Sport for Development theory (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). These concepts are linked to Senegal's economic development issues and needs, where education, in this case anchored with a sport, stands as a fundamental enabling factor intended to move the country's development from one stage to the next. Other emerging countries with similar challenges might look to the success of the SEED Project and sport-for-development as a piece of the path to economic growth. The paper concludes with SEED's future expansion plans and reflections on the program.*

## INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about sport for development (SFD), defined by Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011, p. 311) as “the use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialisation of children, youths and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution”. A broader definition of SFD is provided in the *Journal of Sport for Development* – “The intentional use of sport, physical activity and play to attain specific development objectives in low- and middle-income countries and disadvantaged communities in high-income settings” (Richards et al. 2013, p. 1). In essence, SFD programs use sport as the “hook” to attract people interested in sport, in order to achieve a non-sport development goal.

Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011) advanced SFDT (sport for development theory) to examine how sport interventions can most effectively promote social change and development and to provide a blueprint for using sport as a vehicle to promote positive social change. SFDT is one of the first attempts to provide a theoretical foundation for the management of sport interventions that effectively promote social change, peace, and development (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). The academic literature on sport for development has grown significantly and a comprehensive review of the literature on sport for development is provided

by Schulenkorf, Sherry, and Rowe (2016). In a review of over 473 academic journal articles since 2000, they found a trend towards articles focusing on social and educational outcomes, particularly related to youth sport with soccer as the most common activity. However, the authors noted a limited number of academic articles on SFD and livelihood or financial independence. They note that few of the researchers include local contributors from the countries that were analyzed. Moreover, they “encourage scholars to conduct more research on SFD programs that focus on job skills training, employability, rehabilitation, and the creation of social enterprises; in particular, we believe that the SFD sector would benefit from collaborative research between social scientists and economists regarding new approaches, innovative strategies, and creative tactics to improve the livelihoods of disadvantaged people around the world” (Schulenkorf, Sherry, & Rowe 2016, p. 34).

We use the case study method to examine the SEED Project (short for Sport, Education & Economic Development). Our paper addresses some of the less covered points noted above by Schulenkorf, Sherry, and Rowe (2016).

For the SEED Project, sport is merely the tool to foster life skills and education -- the ultimate goal is to improve socio-economic conditions for individual youth, local communities, and for Senegal and eventually other countries in Africa. With this in mind, we examine the SEED Project for both processes and outcomes with a view towards what is successful and what can be generalized for expansion to other locations.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

Although based on a single case study, this research method allows for an in-depth examination of the situation and provides insights for future research. It is best applied when the objective is to provide a firsthand understanding of people and events (Yin, 2006). The research described in this paper is an explanatory study. Explanatory case studies focus on the “how” and “why” of a situation (Yin, 1998). The authors relied on internal documents, interviews, and published web materials from the SEED to understand how an organization in an emerging market implemented a unique education program.

The paper begins with an overview of SEED and its programs. Next, we discuss why education delivered by a program like SEED is so important for Senegal based on its stage of economic development. We then provide an overview of sport-for-development theory and how SEED fits into this model and uses sport as the “hook” for education. We conclude with reflections on the SEED Project and future expansion plans.

## **OVERVIEW OF SEED**

The SEED Project was established in 1998 by Amadou Gallo Fall, SEED’s Founder and Chairman. Funded by a basketball scholarship in the early 1990s, Fall obtained a degree in microbiology in the United States. Moreover, it was this basketball scholarship which provided him the opportunity to attain an education which would otherwise have been unreachable. Although Fall’s career plan and preparation were focused on the medical field, the idea of

spreading the same kind of educational opportunity to other young people in his home town of Senegal through basketball took hold.

Fall's objective was more than simply promoting basketball. In an interview with CNN, Fall stated that "As Africans, we have a responsibility to build our community," and that "Those days are over where other people came, saw tremendous potential and resources that exist here and you know, exploited to their benefit or advantage. It's about empowering our youth making them see that there is a pathway to success" (Chen & Barnett, 2013).

The SEED Project's concept is based on Fall's life experiences in Senegal, Africa and educational experiences in the United States as a student-athlete in basketball. The SEED Project enhances and enriches our conceptual analysis with empirical illustrations of SFD and how isolated change agents venture out as leaders of movements for more inclusive development due to the crucial need to provide better socio-economic conditions to future generations.

### **SEED Programs**

SEED uses a unique blend of education and basketball as tools to help young people realize their potential. Through this, they seek to empower students to become the role models and mentors for future generations (SEED Project, January 24 2018). Additionally, the SEED Academy provides housing for students, another unique aspect of the program. The SEED Project consists of three main programs – SEED Rise, SEED Academy, and SEED Alumni -- which combine sports and education for participants ranging in ages from six through young adults. The descriptions of these programs below come from SEED's website (<http://www.seedproject.org/>) and unpublished presentation materials (SEED Project, January 24 2018).

- SEED RISE (ages 6-18): An after-school academic, athletic, and leadership program currently serving over 2,000 boys and girls. SEED Rise offers basketball clinics, academic tutoring, and life skills lessons for youth (SEED Rise, n.d.).
- SEED ACADEMY (ages 12-18): Provides full scholarships for 40 top student athletes (both boys and girls) to attend the SEED Academy's boarding school in Thies, Senegal. Students receive room and board, school tuition, academic support, basketball training, leadership development, and English language classes (SEED Academy, n.d.).
- SEED ALUMNI (ages 19+): Career service support is provided for the over 120 SEED graduates currently working or studying in over 16 countries. (SEED Project, January 24 2018).

Two other additional initiatives are:

- WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: In Senegal, girls are less likely to attend school, more likely to drop out to tend to household chores or prepare for marriage, and rarely encouraged to re-enroll (UNESCO as cited at <http://www.seedproject.org/pictureusballin> ). The expectations for SEED Rise female students is the same as for male students – to graduate high school, continue their educations, and become future leaders and role models.

- SEED GIVES: There is a strong culture throughout the SEED organization of giving back. SEED Gives is a program-wide, community service initiative that enables students to gain leadership skills while running community service events (SEED Gives, n.d.).

## **EDUCATION, DEVELOPMENT AND SEED IN THE CONTEXT OF SENEGAL**

The important role of education for development is a well-accepted concept. For example, Todaro states that “Education is fundamental to enhancing the quality of human life and ensuring social and economic progress” (Todaro, 2000, p. 226). In a similar vein, the United Nations’ Report on the World Social Situation (1997) noted: “Education is the key to creating, adapting and spreading knowledge... But the gains in access to education have been unevenly distributed, with the poor seldom getting their fair share” (Todaro, 2000, p. 326). The challenge is how to implement education for development. The Education Development Center (EDC) notes that Africa, in particular, will require innovative solutions to take advantage of investments in educational, economic, and physical infrastructure (<https://www.edc.org/region/africa>, n.d.).

Furthering the debates about education and the paradigm shift in pedagogy and perspective, Skinner, Blum and Bourn (2013) argue for “development education” versus “education and development”. They contend that development education, which promotes local and global citizenship, is often missing when it comes to international development and education. “Development education's critical pedagogical perspective empowers learners to further economic, political and social change, and therefore could make a valuable contribution to the global drive to secure quality education for all’ (Skinner, Blum & Bourn 2013, section 2.17).

SEED Project founder Fall has been working to accomplish economic development, building up from a micro level, by providing quality education tied to Senegalese/African values, needs and contexts. The sport component of the SEED Project is accompanied by education enabling SEED students to be molded with the mindsets, skills, and knowledge to attain a better life economically and socially. As described in a later section, the goal is to have an educational curriculum which prepares students for university level studies as well as, enables them to become socially responsible citizens and leaders for the sustainable benefit of the country and continent.

### **Education and Economic Considerations**

The mission of SEED is to foster an environment which will lead to greater economic outcomes, both for the individual participants and the country as a whole. To better understand the challenge of achieving this, one needs to have some contextual understanding of Senegal and Africa.

Senegal, on the Western coast of Africa, is a part of the Sub-Saharan sub-region of Africa. The World Development Indicators database by the World Bank states that in 2018, Senegal’s population was 15.85 million people with a GDP of US \$24.13 billion. Putting this

into perspective, the GDP in 2000 was only US \$5.92 billion, indicative of positive growth over eight years. The accompanying annual economic growth rate from 3.2% in 2000 to 6.8% in 2018, provided a dynamic macro-environment resulting in a net foreign direct investment increase from US \$81 million in 2000 to US \$587 million in 2018 along with a decline in net official development assistance from US \$936.4 million in 2010 to US \$909.8 million in 2018. (World Development Indicators Database, Country Profile Senegal, n.d.). Demographic trends in Senegal point to both opportunities and challenges -- with more than 60% of the population under 25 years of age, economic growth is needed to create more opportunity for young people (The World Fact Book, 2019).

Africa as a whole, is a land of contrasts. According to Abramson and Moran (2018, p. 568), "Africa has been classified as the Third World in economic terms – it contributes only 1 percent of the global economic output. This poor continent is often viewed as a land of tragedy or promise because of its rich natural and human resources that have not been fully developed... The cause of the current woes goes with past European colonialism and inadequate education of the African people".

One way to consider the trajectory of economic growth for Senegal (and Africa) is through a traditional model such as Rostow 's Stages of Economic Growth Model (1959). However, Rostow's notion of economic growth paths which comprised five stages: the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass consumption, pose questions as to how and where Senegal falls on this continuum. Recent questions such as -- must African economies follow these five stages to achieve sustainable economic growth?; are there alternative approaches for sustainable economic growth among African countries?; can technology transfer or technology acquisition enable an economy to skip early stages stipulated by Rostow and still achieve sustainable growth? -- have been topics of discussion by scholars and practitioners globally (Ojide, 2017). Such discussions merit attention, especially for Senegal, as proper and adequate education enables the skills and knowledge needed to foster advances in technological innovation and diffusion, which in turn adds to the power of accelerating the national competitive advantage. This may qualify the country to bypass the traditional steps and leap to a higher economic growth development stage (see, e.g., Porter, 1990; Ozturk, 2001; Prof. Mamadou Fall, History Department, Cheikh Anta Diop University, email communication to authors, August 28, 2019).

Other factors, such as stability of the government, consistent and adequate public policies, and quality of the educational system, among others, need to be present in order to move the economy forward (Porter, 1990). Already, Senegal has made progress by taking steps to improve their ease of doing business ranking – now 141 out of 190 countries for 2019, an increase from 2014 when it was 178 out of 189 countries (World Bank Group, 2019; World Bank, 2013). Senegal is poised to become a middle income economy by 2035 by instituting the Emerging Senegal Plan. This plan, initiated in 2013, includes reforms and modernization strategies including infrastructure (e.g., Dakar's state of the art international airport became operational in 2017), a global partnership to facilitate the transition to clean energy, emphasis on science, technology and the digital sector, and smart city planning. The ultimate objective is to showcase Senegal equipped to be the gateway to Africa. Another project of this ongoing

strategy includes the new city known as Diamniadio – being built near the airport “with special economic zones, a free-trade area, a tech city, research centers and a medical campus” (Munshi, 2018; Presidency of the Republic of Senegal, 2018). Should the Emerging Senegal Plan be successfully implemented, it will take Senegal to a higher level of economic and social development, bypassing Rostow’s continuum stages and be an example of Porter’s national competitiveness. Senegal then will serve as a sustainable economic model and be well positioned to “advocate for the African continent ..... If Africa lagged behind in the industrial revolution, it intends to hold its place firmly in the digital age” (Presidency of the Republic of Senegal, 2018).

The next sections describe Sport for Development Theory and how SEED uses sport to implement their strategy for motivating Senegalese youth to achieve a better life through education -- and thus, eventually contributing to the leap for the economy.

### **SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT THEORY (SFDT) AND THE SEED PROJECT**

Sport for Development Theory (SFDT) posits that by blending sports with other activities (e.g., educational or cultural), personal development and social change can be facilitated. The SFDT framework and associated outcomes consist of five components: (a) impacts assessment, (b) organizational, (c) sport and physical activity, (d) educational, and (e) cultural enrichment (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011).

While the scope of SFDT is interdisciplinary and draws on theory from management, inter-group contact, and psychology among others, it is beyond the scope of this paper to review all of the theoretical foundations (see Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011 for details). However, we use the SFDT model as a framework to aid in understanding how the SEED Project works in Senegal. Below we summarize each element of the SFDT framework and map how SEED supports social and educational objectives through sport. A summary of SEED activities and selected SFDT concepts is shown in Table 1 below.

<b>Table 1</b> <b>SUMMARY OF SEED PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT THEORY COMPONENTS</b>				
Impacts Assessment	Organizational	Sport	Educational	Cultural Enrichment
Qualitative and quantitative evaluations of programs	Strong change agent – founder continues to champion SEED	Basketball for learning life skills	Strong educational curriculum – prepare for university	Strong ethos for “giving back”
Micro: Changes in student attitudes and beliefs	Partnerships with NBA, Nike, USAid, UNICEF, Peace Corps, and others	Basketball games enable students to meet others outside their local communities	Standardized Coach training in basketball and life skills	Numerous activities, presentations, etc. outside of regular school schedule
Meso: Community events	Flat, informal, collaborative organizational structure	Basketball is the “hook” for education, engages students	Student and parent buy-in and accountability	Culturally relevant
Macro: Graduation rates, post-graduation career outcomes	Fluid organization with members doing multiple jobs	Basketball for scholarship and/or career opportunities	Positioned for the future (Women’s Empowerment, STEM)	Travel for play and study

Table adapted from Lyras & Welty Peachey (2011)

### **The Impacts Assessment Component**

The impacts assessment component proposes that sports intervention programs that aim to bring about social change and development should be evaluated at three levels – macro, meso, and micro levels of society. In addition to these three levels of analysis, SFDT also stipulates that lasting effects and transferability of the program be evaluated (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011).

SEED provides quantitative and qualitative assessment of its programs. On a local (micro) level, SEED participants are students (grades K-University) and out-of-school youth. For young people who are in school, the emphasis is on ensuring their year-to-year success. Since SEED Academy opened in 2002, 110 students have graduated and 92% have either enrolled in university or secured a job upon leaving the program. Eighty-four (76%) of SEED Academy graduates have continued on to universities in the U.S. (57), Senegal (24) and Europe (3). These outcomes compare very favorably to the only 7% of youth who attend university in the communities served by SEED (SEED Project, January 24 2018). Additionally, at the high school level, 94% of graduates passed the BAC, the national high school exit exam while only 35% of the country passes the test. Furthermore, 83% of graduates passed the BFEM, the

national middle school exit exam. Just 49% of the country passes the test (SEED Project Impact, n.d.).

SEED Rise provides a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation process with micro level measures such as the number of youth impacted, their change in behavior, skills acquired, number of coaches trained, attitudes toward gender equality, and higher education opportunities (SEED Project, January 24 2018). Following the Live, Learn, and Play curriculum (described in the subsection -- The Educational Component), quantitative measures indicate that SEED participants showed increased self perceived citizenship skills and more positive gender attitudes and beliefs after participating in the program. Qualitative assessments indicated that participants had increased confidence, tolerance, and respect for others. Parents and coaches also reported positive changes in youth behavior (SEED Project, February 15, 2017).

At the community (meso) level, SEED programs position young people to be leaders within their communities. Students host community give-back events (i.e. trash recycling awareness, basketball clinics, computer programming, etc.). SEED also partners with local schools throughout the year to offer SEED Rise after-school programming for students, and schedule friendly matches between school clubs (SEED Project Impact, n.d.).

At the country (macro) level, the ultimate goal of the SEED Project is to prepare young people to be their country's future leaders. As stated on the SEED website – “We believe that the countries we serve must be developed from within, and our programs give students the confidence they need to dream big, and the tools they need to make them come true” (SEED Project Impact, n.d.). Macro level impacts are difficult to measure directly, but preliminary trends are encouraging if one considers that 92% of SEED Academy students matriculate to university or secure a job (SEED Project Impact, n.d.).

### **The Organizational Component**

According to Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011), the organizational component refers to how changes can be defined and facilitated through sport to achieve program objectives. They note that organizational change is best understood by looking at multiple indicators and point to the importance of change agents. Organizational partnership efficiency is also key to secure scarce resources (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011).

The importance of a strong change agent and champion can be seen in how the SEED Project evolved. It was Amadou Gallo Fall’s dream for other African youth to have the same opportunity that he had for education through sport. That dream and how it was implemented are reflected in SEED’s philosophy:

*“We use education and basketball to develop the next generation of African leaders. ... Our programs are designed to inspire, empower and equip these young people with the skills they need to succeed in life. Through this, we will re-define the student-athlete model and develop socially conscious leaders that will continue to drive Africa forward”. (SEED Mission, n.d.).*

This innovative business model transcended a traditional educational learning establishment to integrate a sport – basketball – as an added fundamental pillar. Fall’s idea was

that this training would equip youth with real life skills, necessary for playing important roles as individuals, in their communities, in Africa, as well as globally.

Fall's determination and hard work eventually drew attention from institutions such as the NBA (National Basketball Association) and Nike. Both the NBA and Nike have relationships with SEED, providing equipment and financial donations to support students on an annual basis. As described by SEED -- "Our relationship with the NBA is not restricted to a philanthropic one. We are the implementing agent for all of their operations in Senegal ... SEED's main sponsorship agreement is with Nike. We are partners with the NBA. We have event sponsorship from Wari [financial services], ContourGlobal [global power generating], UNFPA [United Nations Population Fund], Casamancaise [mineral water]" (Brian Benjamin, CFO, SEED, email communication to authors, July 12, 2019).

These relationships are important for SEED since the Senegalese government does not provide funding and the organization must seek private support. As of 2002, SEED is a non-profit organization (NGO) formally established when the SEED Academy was inaugurated in the city of Thies, Senegal. It also has 501c3 status as a non-profit in the United States. Because of its NGO status and mission, SEED also benefits from relationships with USAid, UNICEF, and the Peace Corps, among others.

The structure of SEED tends to be flat and somewhat informal in nature, lending itself to an environment where members work together collaboratively and cooperatively whenever necessary to achieve the set tasks. This fits with the workings of the organization which, since its inception, has been evolving along its trajectory towards achieving the principal goal of inclusive development and growth for all of Africa. Growth is exemplified by programs beyond the SEED Academy, including the implementation of the SEED Rise Program, followed by the Women's Empowerment initiative in 2013, and the planned SEED campus for Sandira, Senegal 2025. A flexible, fluid structure, whether by design or serendipitous, has helped SEED make decisions and implement programs at a faster pace than otherwise might have occurred.

### **The Sport Component**

The third pillar of SFDT is the sport component. Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011) draw from literature on physical activity and moral development, as well as, sports in regions where conflict exists. "Research indicates that sport can contribute to moral development only when applied in a setting with an appropriate philosophy and/or an educational emphasis" (Lyras & Welty Peachey 2011, p. 316).

The objective of sport in the SEED program is twofold. First, basketball for SEED Rise and SEED Academy students is the means to teach skills that contribute to character formation (i.e., teamwork and citizenship skills) and enable them to stay focused academically. Second, the older SEED Academy students learn to play basketball at such a high level of competence, this is leveraged to enable them to earn college scholarships and/or professional play contracts. In fact, 58 students have played college basketball in the U.S. , 31 graduates have played professional basketball around the globe, and 6 have played in the NBA or NBDL (SEED Project, January 24 2018).

SEED Academy students attend training before class, then go to school, and perhaps have another training session after school. Overall though, sport (specifically basketball) is the foundation for learning life skills and discipline in order to make a better life for oneself, the community, and the country.

Basketball also benefits SEED students by giving them the opportunity to interact with those outside their local communities. Students compete in tournaments both nationally and in other countries. Students play in the National Senegalese Club League and in February 2019 travelled to Morocco for the first tournament for SEED Girls abroad, beating France in the final match.

Why was basketball the chosen sport in a country where soccer is dominant? This goes back to Fall's own experience with higher education at an American university, made possible by a basketball scholarship and the relationships he developed at that time. Interestingly, while soccer is the most popular and most played sport in Senegal (and Africa), basketball is the more popular sport for women. SEED's Women's Empowerment program, coupled with basketball, proved to be the pathway towards having girls join the SEED Academy.

### **The Educational Component**

SFDT asserts that "...sport, when used within an educational framework, can become a powerful tool for achieving educational objectives..." (Lyras & Welty Peachey 2011, p. 317). Moreover, the problem solving/working together culture developed by participating in sports may then be transferred to solving real world problems. The role of instructors as mentors is also noted in SFDT.

The SEED Project is an excellent example of the concepts of SFD, blending sport and education to achieve higher goals. Basketball is the "hook" used to engage youth in SEED programs. The basketball curriculum teaches youth fundamental skills and team-based concepts. SEED's educational program is designed to support student performance in school, increase student retention rates, and assist students to matriculate to universities in Africa or abroad.

SEED trains local youth coaches in a basketball and life-skills curriculum. Currently, over 352 coaches implement the SEED Rise curriculum in schools and youth clubs. The SEED Rise program provides after-school basketball, academic tutoring and life skills program for grades K-12. Rise works with local communities and schools to develop youth basketball infrastructure that aligns with community needs (SEED Project, January 24 2018).

Coach training is accomplished by SEED using the *Live, Learn, and Play Coaching Manual* part of the Live, Learn and Play (LLP) initiative by the NBA and USAID (Duffy, Coulibaly & Sharer, 2016). This provides specific goals, instructions, worksheets, learning activities, and discussion points for coaches to accomplish their tasks and creates a shared organizational culture that can be replicated in other locations. Specific instructions are provided for a week by week curriculum covering such topics as basketball basics, physical development, good citizenship, and collective commitment

The LLP Coaching Manual also includes a LLP Youth Contract that participants must sign to acknowledge their commitment to the goals of the program. Additionally, students have

a citizenship and basketball goal worksheet where each week they make a commitment to completing one citizenship and one basketball goal. SEED also works closely with participant's parents so they are knowledgeable about the program model and help reinforce core values. The student's parent/caregiver must sign the sheet to indicate the goal was accomplished (Duffy, Coulibaly, and Sharer 2016). Thus, expectations are clearly stated and both students and parents/caregivers make a formal commitment to the SEED Rise program.

SEED Academy, serving grades 6-12, provides full scholarships for 40 top student athletes (20 boys and 20 girls) to attend the SEED Academy's boarding school in Thies, Senegal. Students receive room and board, school tuition, academic support, basketball training, leadership development, and English language classes. As these spots for top students are limited, recruiting follows a strict criteria based on the results of BFEM, the annual national test for middle school students, plus an assessment of athletic competence. While the program is based in Senegal, students are recruited from all over Africa regardless of social class or financial resources.

The academic program for SEED Academy students follows the French system and is the national curriculum for Senegal. The classes include mathematics, science, literature, philosophy, and history with an increasing emphasis on STEM subjects to meet the needs of a digital economy. Classes are given in French, but there is a strong emphasis on English. SEED has an ESL online program with a school in Chicago, to improve students' English language skills so they are prepared to attend school in the U.S., should they wish to do so. Students are also prepped for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), the standardized test for college admissions in the U.S. The goal is to make it easier for the next generation to attend college by preparing them early with all the tools they need to succeed. This training has paid off as SEED Academy graduates have been awarded an average of \$124K in scholarships per student (SEED Project, December 2017).

### **The Cultural Enrichment Component**

The final component of SFDT, the cultural enrichment component, encompasses the blend of sport with cultural and educational activities and global citizenship education (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). The idea is to promote social change by providing participants with multidisciplinary, cultural enrichment opportunities that add to understanding of local and/or global concerns (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). "Cultural enrichment can include theatre, arts and music workshops and activities, as well as topics and initiatives that speak to human rights issues, the Olympic spirit, conflict management, environmental awareness, health and wellbeing, and technology, among others" (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011 p.318).

These elements of cultural enrichment are embedded throughout the SEED Rise and SEED Academy programs, and also through the many additional programs outside of the purely academic and sports arenas. Examples of these activities include:

- Hoop Forum: An annual basketball showcase for boys and girls ages 18 and under, the forum brings together non-profits, corporations, and individuals using sport as a tool for development across Africa. International guests, African basketball legends, SEED

student-athletes and local basketball coaches take part in elite basketball camps, community give-back events, concerts, cultural activities, networking opportunities, among other activities.

- SEED Culture: Started in 2015, this is an organization-wide effort to honor Senegal's diverse cultural roots. The culmination of each year's SEED Culture workshops is a performance by SEED Rise students at the Hoop Forum. Seed students show “why SEED is so much bigger than basketball” (<http://www.seedproject.org/blog/2017/5/12/hoop-forum-2017-recap>).
- Women’s Empowerment: This program includes a series of leadership workshops across the school year and summer for SEED young women, as well as opportunities for male students to participate and support their female peers. Furthermore, as part of an initiative to teach girls about technology, SEED women participated in a coding workshop with #iamtheCODE, an NGO focused on increasing girl’s access to technology (SEED Women’s Empowerment, n.d.).
- SEED Speaks: A series to teach students public speaking skills and etiquette, as well as participate in a debate club (<http://www.seedproject.org/blog>).
- Workshops: SEED alumni and professionals speak with students about topics such as careers, financial literacy, and individual development.

Taken together, all of the SEED Project programs support social change by allowing participants to make links between their sports activities and real life activities in their local communities. Running throughout the program is a strong ethos to give back to the community – whether that is SEED Scholars mentoring current students, students supporting their local communities through service events, or SEED alumni working in Africa to improve the economy.

As Fatou Pouye, a 20 year old from Senegal who earned a scholarship to attend South Georgia Tech stated:

*“... SEED helped me with my studies and basketball training. I hope to one day go back to SEED and help other young women achieve their dreams as well...I feel prepared for future success because of the values I learned at SEED. I now have self-confidence, power and an open mind. With all of this, the only thing I can do is succeed.” (Pouye, 2017)*

## **LESSONS LEARNED FROM SEED – REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

A new generation of African entrepreneurs has embraced the concept of “Africapitalism,” introduced in 2011 by Tony Elumelu a Nigerian banker and entrepreneur (Idemudia, Amaeshi & Okupe, 2018). Africapitalism is a call to the private sector to play a role in the continent’s development by increasing economic and social wealth in the communities they serve. As consumers in these communities become better off, businesses will also become more profitable (“What Is Africapitalism?”, 2019). While SEED is not a for-profit enterprise, it is an example of the principles behind Africapitalism, using entrepreneurship and shared purpose to enable programs that lead to positive social and economic outcomes.

SEED’s trajectory, from one person’s mission of educating youth, supplemented with basketball as an activity to build life skills, continues to progress as the organization seeks to

expand. Most recently, a SEED Rise program was launched in Gabon at the end of 2019. SEED expansion plans include a SEED Campus in Sandiara, Senegal by 2025 to accommodate 250 students (boys and girls) from across Africa with world-class education and basketball training. The curriculum will have a heavy emphasis on STEM, agribusiness, and social entrepreneurship. Proximity to Sandiara Technical School provides added vocational training opportunities and SEED continues to seek additional partnerships for this new venture (Seed Project, June 12, 2019).

SEED's establishment in 1998 arose from an idea to provide a way for Senegal's youth to improve economically and become more productive citizens – its model serves as an exemplar of corporate social responsibility. One should keep in mind though that like any business model, the SEED Project has been designed and implemented in the context of a country and continent. It reflects an example from Senegalese and African perspectives and may need adaptation in order to be adopted in other parts of the world.

Challenges still remain for the SEED Project. Measurement of success at the economic level is difficult to quantify and one must rely on qualitative data and jobs created as a proxy for success.

As mentioned previously, SEED relies entirely on financial donations to support its programs. SEED must continuously evolve and enhance its programs in order to continue to provide high quality and appropriate education and sports training to attract donors, sponsorship, and partners.

*“The key hindrance is of cost. Communities are not able to support such programming by themselves, so in order for it to be executed effectively, SEED takes on the responsibility for all expense” (Brian Benjamin, CFO, SEED, email message to authors, July 12, 2019).*

The attractiveness and fit of the sponsor also impacts the likelihood of attracting participants to SEED programs. Of note, a study by Kim & Heere (2012) found that young people from developing countries like to wear global sports brands (e.g., Nike) because they are symbolic of being part of a global community (not because of an association with the West). Similarly, SEED t-shirts with sponsor Nike's Swoosh logo likely serves as an additional draw for young people. SEED students who go on to professional basketball may serve a similar symbolic role – they become global citizens and role models for young people in the program.

While the SEED Project used basketball as the hook, other activities could work depending upon the country and popularity of the sport among young people. For example, Loat (2021) notes that new sports arise that are appropriate to a region and even advocates the use of esports and gamification to attract digital natives. Furthermore, according to the UNICEF Sport for Development Programming Survey, soccer is the most popular activity in sport for development programs. But other SFD activities include athletics, boxing, chess, netball, mind games, Para sports, rugby, sailing, skateboarding, and surfing (Office of Research – Innocenti, 2019 p. 47).

Senegal's main challenge is accelerating economic growth in order to create more opportunity for young people, who are the majority of the population (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). The SEED Program is an important case study in improving lives when one considers the

current state of Senegal's economy and the potential of education to improve socio-economic conditions. Other emerging countries with similar challenges might look to the success of the SEED Project and sport-for-development as a piece of the path to economic growth.

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