

Research summary

Paralympic Broadcasting in Sub-Saharan Africa: Sport, Media and Communication for Social Change



Full report

About

The purpose of this commentary is to discuss how Paralympic coverage in sub-Saharan Africa can be effectively mobilised to stimulate discursive and structural change around disability. Paralympic coverage has demonstrated its pedagogical power to engage public(s) and challenge stigma toward disability. Yet, the Global picture of Paralympic broadcasting is deeply uneven, with audiences in parts of the Global South afforded limited opportunities to watch the Games. Considering this, the International Paralympic Committee has begun to broadcast Paralympic coverage across sub-Saharan Africa with an explicit aim to challenge stigma toward disability.



Materials and Methods

This article draws on examples from research to argue that ideas from the field of Communication for Social Change (CfSC) can add value towards this aim. The article begins by providing a brief overview of CfSC before critically examining one of the field's key concepts – Communicative (E)ecologies. Following this, the authors critically reflect on the potential of Paralympic broadcasting as a vehicle for social change and disability rights agendas in sub-Saharan Africa. They argue that thinking with CfSC concepts show the importance of a 'decentred' media approach that engages with disability community advocacy groups, localised communication activities and practices, and culturally specific disability narratives.

Conclusion:

This study examines how Communication for Social Change (CfSC) can improve sports media's impact on disability rights in the Global South, particularly through Paralympic coverage in Sub-Saharan Africa. By collaborating with local disability advocacy groups and using culturally relevant storytelling, CfSC offers a framework to challenge disability stigma and promote broader social change.

The study emphasizes the need for critical analysis of Paralympic broadcasts, acknowledging their limitations without local stakeholder involvement. Further research is crucial to assess the broadcasts' effectiveness and long-term impact, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive field of communication and sport that leverages the power of sports media for social change in the Global South.



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