



# SPORT AND PEACE

SOCIAL INCLUSION, CONFLICT PREVENTION  
AND PEACE-BUILDING



# CHAPTER 6

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Ian MacDonald (on behalf of  
Right To Play/ Thailand Migrant  
SportWorks Project)

# 1 CONTEXT: PEACE, DEVELOPMENT AND SPORT

## 1.1 PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Peace among and within nations is a fundamental human aspiration and a primary goal of the global development community.

International commitments to peace and conflict resolution are widespread and clearly articulated in the Millennium Declaration adopted by the United Nations on September 8, 2000: “We will spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war, whether within or between States, which has claimed more than five million lives in the past decade.”<sup>1</sup> This statement reinforces an earlier General Assembly resolution acknowledging that “governments have an essential role in promoting and strengthening a culture of peace.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1999, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the right to peace, affirming peace as a human right and “appeal[ing] to all states and international organizations to do their utmost to assist in implementing the right of people to peace through the adoption of appropriate measures at both the national and the international level.”<sup>3</sup>

These declarations are rooted in the understanding that peace, in addition to being essential to human security<sup>4</sup> and well-being, is a necessary condition for all development — social, cultural and economic — and that violent conflicts can quickly wipe out decades of development gains.

In countries directly affected by armed conflict within their borders, many civil society institutions stop functioning, critical health and education systems break down, physical

infrastructure is destroyed, agricultural activity is interrupted, food supplies become scarce, commerce and trade shrink, poverty increases, populations are uprooted and made homeless, disease epidemics spread unchecked, discrimination against vulnerable populations increases, and violence and criminality become widespread. Lives are lost or shortened by violence, hunger and disease; survivors are left with permanent psychological scars and often physical disabilities; families are separated and deprived of their livelihoods; and countless children are orphaned. Where land mines have been used, civilians continue to be killed, maimed and prevented from returning their land to productive use, long after wars themselves are over.

Currently, there are over 32 wars or conflicts raging in more than 27 countries. The majority of these involve struggles for political and economic control between competing groups within a country. In some cases, groups are contesting the existence of the state itself. Even in regions where peace has been restored, sustaining peace can be a significant challenge, with 50% of countries that emerge from violent conflict slipping back into instability or violence within five years.<sup>5</sup>

While countries engaged in war outside of their own borders may not suffer these effects, military engagements divert resources away from domestic uses. As economists have long noted, investment in “guns” comes at the expense of investment in “butter,” sometimes to the extent of impeding a country’s ability to meet the basic human needs of its population.

Not all conflict is national in scale. Many communities have to contend with more localized tensions and conflicts arising between different political factions, ethno-cultural groups, long-time residents and newcomers, etc. While these may, or may not, involve outbreaks of violence, they polarize communities, foster hostility and distrust, and undermine the collaboration needed to advance development initiatives.

Finally, some communities may experience conflict related to the presence of organized criminal elements. Typically such organizations are intent on maintaining and expanding control of lucrative illegal enterprises and extracting money and other resources from the local population through coercion. Organized crime is most often present where civil society institutions are weak or non-existent and governments are vulnerable to corruption through instability, poor governance, lack of transparency, and inadequate resources to pay civil servants adequately. Because any development which strengthens public and civil society institutions is a threat to the dominance and control of criminal gangs, these gangs are active opponents of development.

Peace can be defined in many ways but, for the purposes of this chapter, the terms “negative peace” and “positive peace” are particularly useful. Negative peace refers to an absence of violent conflict, but the continued existence of the sources of violence (e.g., fear, hatred, intolerance) and structures of violence (e.g., injustice, denial of rights, discrimination, social and economic exclusion) that cut short human life as a result of failure to address preventable causes of harm (e.g., lack of access to clean water or basic health care). Structural violence may arise as a result of local, national, or international policies and actions — or the interaction of all three.

In contrast, positive peace refers to the absence of both violent conflict and structural violence and offers optimal conditions for development. Positive peace-building involves helping nations to develop more just and democratic systems in which poverty, illiteracy, and other root causes of conflict are eliminated.<sup>6</sup> The closer nations and communities come to attaining this state, the more likely they are to be successful in safeguarding human rights and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Ideally, this means addressing societal tensions and the structural causes of violence before they escalate into full-blown conflicts. In a development context, this can mean:

- ensuring basic human needs are met,
- strengthening civil society and its institutions,
- fostering more democratic and transparent governance,
- ensuring a fair and impartial justice system,
- reducing poverty, and
- finding ways to break down barriers and build cohesion among different ethno-cultural groups — across political lines, between citizens and newcomers, and among the rich and poor.

Where violent conflicts have already broken out, the challenge is greater — finding ways to lessen the effects of conflicts on communities even as they take place and to de-escalate conflict itself until peace has been restored.

Once peace has been achieved, effective processes are needed to demobilize and disarm combatants and to foster reconciliation and healing in order to prevent conflicts from flaring up again. These processes are an integral aspect of a broader range of activities referred to as peace-building. Originally defined in the United Nations Agenda for Peace (1992)<sup>7</sup> as a purely post-conflict activity, peace-building has evolved to include four main

types of activities taking place before and after peace accords are in place:

- providing security;
- building the socio-economic foundations for long-term peace;
- establishing the political framework for long-term peace; and
- fostering reconciliation, healing and justice.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 6.1 presents a variety of peace-building interventions under each of these categories.

These activities reflect the fact that, with the emergence of intra-state conflicts, the focus of peace-building efforts has moved beyond traditional state-centred diplomacy to include the building and maintenance of relationships at all societal levels.

**FIGURE 6.1 PEACE-BUILDING INTERVENTIONS**

<b>SECURITY</b>	<b>SOCIO-ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humanitarian mine action</li> <li>• Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of adult combatants</li> <li>• Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of child combatants</li> <li>• Security sector reform</li> <li>• Small arms and light weapons reduction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical reconstruction</li> <li>• Economic infrastructure</li> <li>• Health and education infrastructure</li> <li>• Repatriation and return of refugees and internally displaced persons</li> <li>• Food security</li> </ul>
<b>POLITICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democratization (parties, media, NGOs, democratic culture)</li> <li>• Strengthening governance (accountability, rule of law, justice system)</li> <li>• Institution building</li> <li>• Human rights enforcement (monitoring laws, justice system)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue between leaders of opposing groups</li> <li>• Grassroots dialogue</li> <li>• Other bridge-building activities</li> <li>• Truth and reconciliation commissions</li> <li>• Trauma therapy and healing</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from *The Peacebuilding Palette (Utstein Report)*<sup>9</sup>

1.2  
SPORT  
AS A TOOL  
TO PREVENT  
CONFLICT AND  
BUILD PEACE

The purpose of sport for peace initiatives is to harness the power of sport to support the four types of peace-building activities outlined in Figure 6.1. Sport alone cannot prevent conflict or build peace. However, it can contribute to broader, more comprehensive efforts in a range of important ways.

### **Building relationships**

Sport works primarily by bridging relationships across social, economic and cultural divides within society, and by building a sense of shared identity and fellowship among groups that might otherwise be inclined to treat each other with distrust, hostility or violence.

One peace researcher views relationship-building as the central component of peace-building and highlights the importance of interventions that explicitly focus on strategic networking to build relationships.<sup>10</sup> Ideally, peace-building establishes a web of relationships that can sustain local damage without loss of the whole. This means that relationships are not all linked to, or dependent on, a single individual or small number of individuals. This includes horizontal connections at the community level across groups and institutions, as well as vertical links to influential leaders and decision-makers outside the community.

NGOs are well positioned to facilitate the process of relationship-building by bringing people together and engaging them in dialogue and programs that cross diverse boundaries. When properly supported, sport programs can play a contributing role in this process, creating more opportunities for social contact. Establishing community sport organizations and the participation of community sport volunteers generates social ties and community infrastructure that help to build peace and stability.<sup>11</sup>

### **Connecting individuals to communities**

Community sport programs can provide shared experiences between people that “re-humanize” opposing groups in the eyes of their enemies. By sharing sport experiences, sport participants from conflicting groups increasingly grow to feel that they are alike, rather than different. This shared “ritual identity,” or sense of belonging to the same group on the basis of a shared ritual experience, helps to erase the dehumanizing effects of persistent negative characterizations of opposing groups.

Sport can serve as a tool to advance demobilization and disarmament efforts and to support the often difficult reintegration of ex-combatants, particularly former child combatants, into their communities. Regular sport activities can also help to address war-related trauma and promote healing by providing safe spaces for activities that enable victims of war to regain a sense of security and normalcy. Within safe spaces, victims are able to build positive relationships and, in the case of those newly disabled, to rebuild a sense of confidence in their own abilities.

Through its nearly universal reach and popularity, sport also offers an important means of reaching out to and engaging socially excluded groups. In these cases, sport programs are often the initial “hook” that opens the door to other opportunities to connect people to a wider range of services and supports that can assist them.

### Using sport as a communications platform

The profile and influence of elite athletes and sporting events can shine a light on the structural causes of social exclusion and help to promote solutions. The global popularity of elite sport makes it an ideal and extremely powerful mass communication platform that can be used to promote a culture of peace. Celebrity athletes, in particular, can be extremely influential as role models and spokespeople for peace and serve, at times, as intermediaries between hostile nations, creating openings for dialogue. While these moments generally occur spontaneously at the international level, the same effect can be generated at the local level through carefully designed programs that work in a sustained way to build bridges between antagonistic groups.

### Creating a space for dialogue

Elite sport has been used to open the door to peaceful dialogue and to defuse political tensions between nations. The famous “ping pong diplomacy” between the People’s Republic of China and the United States was launched in 1971 when an American national table tennis player missed his bus after a practice and was invited onto the Chinese team’s bus. One of the Chinese players offered a silkscreen portrait to his American counterpart in greeting. The American later presented the Chinese player with a T-shirt containing the peace symbol and the words “Let it be.” The media attention that followed this incident led to an invitation for an American government delegation to visit China. More recently, the term “cricket diplomacy” has been used to describe the improvement of relations between India and Pakistan resulting from an informal invitation from Prime Minister Singh to General Musharraf to watch an international cricket match between the two nations.

Sport, at the elite or community level, is increasingly being used in a wide variety of ways to promote social inclusion, prevent conflict, and build peace in developed and developing countries. Whether the aim is to promote peace at the elite or community level, it is important to consider the limitations that may be involved.

## 1.3 LIMITATIONS OF SPORT AS A PEACE-BUILDING MECHANISM

It is important to be aware that there are limitations to peace-building through sport. In the words of one scholar — “[s]port is neither essentially good nor bad. It is a social construct and its role and function depends largely on what we make of it and how it is consumed.”<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, there is no denying that sport can, and is, being used by some groups and nations to promote conflict. Elite sport has been used to wage tit-for-tat diplomacy (equivalent retaliation) to pressure nations, and even to terrorize — as with the murder of Olympic athletes at the Munich Olympic Games. Sport is also commonly used to promote nationalism and, in its more extreme forms such as sport hooliganism, acts of racism and violence against members of minority ethno-cultural groups and other excluded groups.

In general, peace-building is a fragile and unpredictable process. Sport for peace initiatives, undertaken in complex and volatile contexts, are the same in this regard. To be effective, they must be strategic and undertaken in coordination with other key stakeholders in the peace-building process — not by sport organizations alone — especially during periods of conflict. With careful design and implementation, sport for peace initiatives can play a valuable role in helping to prevent conflict and build peace around the world — a fundamental pre-condition for all development.

#### 1.4 SPORT, PEACE AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Although peace is not named explicitly as a Millennium Development Goal, it is widely recognized as a fundamental pre-condition for development progress. Table 6.1 outlines some of the ways sport for peace initiatives can contribute to the achievement of the MDGs.

**TABLE 6.1 SPORT, PEACE AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL	CONTRIBUTION OF SPORT
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement of socially excluded groups — often the very poor — helping them to build their human capital, connecting them with supports and services, and facilitating their social reintegration</li> <li>• Use of high-profile athletes and sport events to highlight structural causes of poverty and social exclusion and to advocate for solutions</li> <li>• Breaking down negative community perceptions of excluded groups that contribute to their ongoing social and economic marginalization</li> <li>• Support for reintegration of ex-combatants, including access to skills training to help them secure jobs</li> </ul>
2. Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouragement and support for orphans, street children, former child combatants and other vulnerable children to enroll in school</li> </ul>
3. Promote gender equality and empower women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for female refugees and newcomers to enjoy physical activity and social interaction, and access information and services to support their temporary or permanent transition into a new community</li> <li>• Support for the reintegration of girls who are former child combatants, helping them to recover from trauma and regain their self-esteem, sense of control over their bodies, and hope for the future</li> </ul>
4. Reduce child mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting families in socially excluded groups to health information and services</li> <li>• Truce opportunities during the Olympic Games that permit immunization efforts and humanitarian aid to proceed in conflict zones</li> </ul>
5. Improve maternal health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting mothers from socially excluded groups, including those who have become mothers as a result of rape, to health information and services</li> </ul>
6. Develop a global partnership for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of global sport and peace networks for awareness-raising and knowledge exchange</li> </ul>

## 1.5 INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR SPORT AND PEACE

Sport's power and importance as a tool for preventing conflict and building peace is reflected in a range of international agreements, strategies and instruments.

In 1993, the United Nations restored the ancient tradition of the Olympic Truce, under which athletes from warring nations are granted safe passage to participate in Olympic Games. Since 1993, prior to every Olympics, the Olympic Truce has been reaffirmed by the United Nations General Assembly through a symbolic Resolution entitled Building a Peaceful and Better World Through Sport and the Olympic Ideal. More recently, the Olympic Truce has been extended to include the Paralympic Games as well. The truce begins seven days before the start of each Olympic/Paralympic Games and continues until seven days after the closing ceremony, reminding the world that sport offers an opportunity to bridge even the most bitter political divides.

Over the past few years the United Nations General Assembly has adopted a series of resolutions<sup>13</sup> on Sport for Development and Peace. The most recent, Resolution 61/10,<sup>14</sup> invites Member States, the United Nations system (including the governing bodies of United Nations agencies), sport-related organizations, the media, civil society and the private sector to collaborate to promote greater awareness and action to foster peace.

Building on the spirit of the UN General Assembly resolutions, in 2007 the International Olympic Committee, the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa, and the African Union issued the Brazzaville Declaration, proposing to join their efforts with those of governments, NGOs and private partners to create a fund for sport for peace initiatives.<sup>15</sup>

These international frameworks reflect growing awareness of sport's potential to help prevent conflict and build peace. To be effective, sport for peace initiatives must be carefully designed with specific conflict prevention or peace-building goals in mind. These initiatives should only be undertaken after a rigorous assessment of the context and dynamics involved to minimize the risk that they will inflame the tensions they are intended to address. Widespread programmatic sport for peace initiatives, however, are relatively new and there is little scientific research that documents their impact. In such cases, programmatic examples provide useful evidence of sport's impact in the area of peace-building.

## 2 EVIDENCE: USING SPORT TO PREVENT CONFLICT AND BUILD PEACE

Of the 34 countries invited by the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group to share information about their Sport for Development and Peace initiatives,<sup>16</sup>

approximately 69% of developing countries and 85% of developed countries either use, or plan to use, sport in national strategies for conflict resolution or peace-building.

Similarly, a review of current sport for peace programs listed on the International Platform on Sport and Development<sup>17</sup> reveals initiatives relating to each of the four key peace-building components identified in Figure 6.1 and to approximately half of the activities under these categories, underscoring the versatility of sport as a peace-building tool. This section explores this versatility and the use of sport for conflict prevention and peace-building both during and after conflicts.

*“Sport is [a] hook that allows other things to happen...”*

- Interviewee, UK program using sport as a tool for inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers<sup>18</sup>

## 2.1 USING SPORT TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION

At the most fundamental level, well-designed sport activities that incorporate the best values of sport — self-discipline, respect for one’s opponent, fair play, teamwork, and adherence to mutually agreed upon rules — help individuals to build the values and communication skills necessary to prevent and resolve conflict in their own lives. In El Salvador, for example, where communities are struggling with a legacy of gang violence in the aftermath of a prolonged civil war, the Scotiabank Salud Escolar Integral program uses sport, play and physical activity to teach life skills — especially conflict prevention and non-violent conflict resolution — to primary and secondary school children, equipping them to make healthy choices later in their lives.<sup>19</sup>

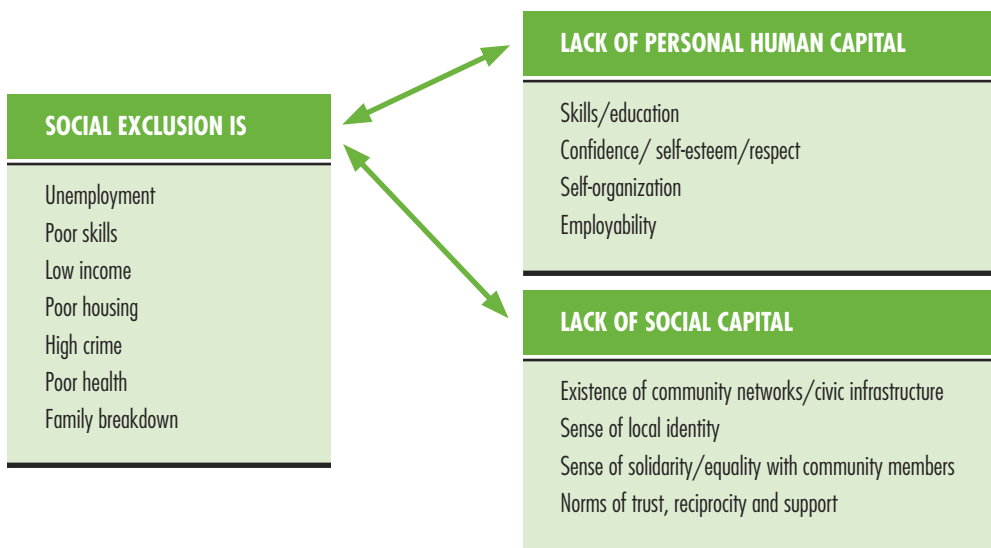
Sport can also be used to reduce tensions and prevent conflict on a broader, community-wide level. Violence has many causes — including lack of opportunity arising from social and economic exclusion. Excluded populations vary greatly, as does the extent of their exclusion. However, excluded populations often include indigenous peoples, members of minority ethno-cultural groups, asylum seekers and refugees, girls and women, persons with disabilities, homeless people, and out-of-school unemployed youth. All people living in extreme poverty suffer from exclusion.

Sport can play an important role in reducing social tensions and conflicts at the community and national level by addressing the sources of this exclusion and providing an alternative entry point into the social and economic life of communities. Many of the factors leading to exclusion (see Figure 6.2), at the individual or the societal level, are mutually reinforcing, causing individuals and groups to experience multiple problems. This experience of

multiple inter-related difficulties often results from, and contributes to, lack of human capital and social capital. Human capital is the skills, knowledge and personal attributes (e.g., confidence, self-esteem, education, employment skills, etc.) that individuals possess. Social capital is the social networks, connections and sense of belonging to wider society that enable individuals to access the people, resources and institutional help they need to tackle challenges and realize opportunities in their lives.<sup>20</sup>

While lack of human capital and social capital manifest in the lives of individuals, they are often the result of social and economic structures and dynamics that constrain the choices available to individuals and the actions they take. As such, factors leading to social exclusion (such as lack of human and social capital) need to be addressed at the societal, as well as individual level in order to achieve real change. Sport can be used at both of these levels to improve people’s lives. Because of its near universal popularity, sport is a particularly effective tool for connecting with socially excluded groups who are often hard to reach.

**FIGURE 6.2 DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION<sup>21</sup>**



Source: Mafoud Amara et al., (2005)

At the individual level, sport can aid fitness, foster health, and enhance mental health and well-being by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression.<sup>22</sup> There is also evidence that sport participation can enhance self-concept, self-esteem and self-confidence.<sup>23</sup> In social psychological terms, sport is believed to have the potential to foster individual empathy, tolerance, cooperation, social skills and teamwork.<sup>24</sup> All of these benefits help individuals to increase their store of human capital.

When Sport for Development and Peace initiatives are well-designed, holistic and sustained, they can help marginalized people to acquire the skills and self-confidence needed to both overcome personal barriers and advocate for the elimination of structural barriers to their full participation in community life.<sup>25</sup> (These aspects of sport are discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 with regard to children and youth, women and girls, and persons with disabilities.) When integrated properly with other community programs and services, sport initiatives can also connect participants to resources that help them in this process, such as health services, education and employment opportunities, or help with starting a small business.

At the societal level, the role of sport in promoting social networks and active citizenship is potentially very important. Research suggests that sport has the potential to promote community identity, coherence and integration,<sup>26</sup> and that people actively involved in sport are more likely to play an active role in the community in other ways.<sup>27</sup> Sport can therefore be used as a tool for building community and social capital.

Social capital is a key element in local responses to problems of social exclusion and is generally thought to serve three important functions — bonding, bridging, and linking. Bonding social capital refers to the informal realm, the close ties that help people to get by. These usually involve family, friends and neighbours.<sup>28</sup> Bridging social capital refers to the civic realm and involves the development of looser ties through networks that extend across different groups in civil society and create bridges between them.<sup>29</sup> Finally, linking social capital refers to the institutional realm, building links to organizations and systems that can help people access resources and bring about broader change.<sup>30</sup>

The following examples highlight how sport is being used to address various forms of social exclusion by building human and social capital and helping to prevent conflicts in communities and at the national level.

### **Integrating refugees, migrants, internally displaced persons, and asylum seekers**

Although refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons (IDPs)<sup>31</sup> differ significantly in their legal status and treatment under international law, these uprooted populations often face similar challenges.<sup>32</sup> Common challenges include breakdown of communities; risk of tension within host communities; increased risk of violence; and increased risk of familial separation. While most available examples of sport for peace initiatives focus specifically on refugees and asylum seekers, the findings presented here can be extrapolated to address the mutual challenges that all of the above-mentioned groups may face.

A research team examined case studies in a systematic review of the role of sport in the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in the United Kingdom.<sup>33</sup> From these case studies, anecdotal stories emerged illustrating the positive effects on participants, including:<sup>34</sup>

- Breaking down barriers between asylum seekers and refugees and the local population;
- Improving relationships between asylum seekers and refugees from different ethnic backgrounds; and
- Providing opportunities to build the self-esteem and self-confidence of asylum seekers and refugees.

Interviewees engaged in sport-based initiatives generally believed that sport acts as a positive vehicle for addressing issues of social inclusion for asylum seekers and refugees, largely because of its capacity to bring people together from different cultural backgrounds. Some believed that team sport offers the greatest potential for positive impact, recognizing that in contact sports, however, tensions can sometimes run high and conflicts may arise. Interviewees noted that the positive benefits of sport do not arise simply because people from different cultural backgrounds are brought together. For sport to be successful in dealing with issues of racism and integration, participants must be challenged when they engage in unacceptable behaviour. If unacceptable behaviour is not challenged, opportunities to develop positive attitudes toward people from other cultures are undermined.<sup>35</sup>

Interviewees provided numerous examples of the effects their programs were having. *Operation Reclaim*, a Scottish program using sport to integrate young refugees and asylum seekers and divert them from gangs and drugs, cited the example of a 17-year-old Scot who was charged with racially aggravated assault two years previously. Following involvement in organized sport, the young Scot became friendly with the asylum seekers and refugees with whom he now played football. His attitude to asylum seekers and refugees changed because he had come to know them personally.<sup>36</sup>

Interviewees also provided examples where sport had brought people together. For example, a 16-team mini world cup five-a-side football competition, organized by the Scottish Asian Sports Association, was considered to be a success in bringing together people from different national and cultural backgrounds.<sup>37</sup>

The Derby Bosnia-Herzegovina Community Association and the Zimbabwean Association football team both provide opportunities for members of their national community to participate in regular team sports and, in so doing, to build stronger bonds within their own communities and greater opportunities for mutual social support.<sup>38</sup> Stakeholders in

both programs indicated that bonding had overcome some of the ethnic, political and religious divides which were endemic in their country of origin. However, this is not always the case and in some instances sporting contests have reignited problems between groups.<sup>39</sup>

*The Madeley Youth and Community Centre Project* in the UK uses sport to build bridges between the local “host” British Asian community and Kurdish refugees and asylum seekers who recently moved into the area. Similarly, the *Swansea World Stars* football team, made up of refugees and asylum seekers, constituted itself as a competitive sporting team in a formal domestic league in Swansea with a plan to build links with other local teams in the Swansea area, rather than simply playing football within the group.<sup>40</sup>

The *Sport Link* project in Charnwood, UK uses sport to develop links between refugee and asylum seeker groups and other institutions. Referral services for women link groups with medical institutions (doctors’ medical practices and health centres) and local government institutions (leisure centres running exercise programs), and give access to sports facilities in the local university, with the goal of fostering educational aspirations in youth participants.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, the *Kingsway Court Health and Well-Being Centre* links the provision of sport and physical recreation opportunities to other services for refugee and asylum seeker groups, including information and advice on men’s and women’s health, community development, English as a Second Language classes, and child care.<sup>42</sup>

None of the above examples has been formally evaluated, so there is no rigorous evidence of their impact. However, in the experience of stakeholders interviewed, the programs are having a positive effect.<sup>43</sup> This suggests that sport initiatives that specifically target bonding, bridging and linking social capital for refugee and asylum seeker groups may be an important means of addressing exclusion, its causes, and related conflict at the community level.

Developing nations, which are often called on to host refugees from conflicts in neighbouring countries, are also making use of sport to promote peaceful coexistence — often among groups from opposing sides of conflicts. The National Republic of Tanzania’s Sport Development Department has been particularly successful in using sport to address conflict among Tanzania’s refugee population. Projects begin by mixing refugee children from different groups in supervised sport and play activities, encouraging them to form friendships across ethnic and cultural boundaries, and building in conflict prevention messages and skill building. Parents are encouraged to become involved and participate as well. The government feels these programs have been very successful in building bridges between the various refugee communities and reducing incidents of conflict.<sup>44</sup>

The Tanzanian government has also declared September 21 to be National Sports Day. In addition to a broad range of sport activities, celebrations include a World Harmony Run organized to promote peace and understanding and reduce conflict. Approximately 2,000 Tanzanians participated in the 2006 run, and even more in 2007.<sup>45</sup>

Sport-based initiatives are also used to help address the trauma experienced by many refugees and asylum seekers. These initiatives are designed to help normalize people's existence and rebuild a sense of security, community and hope. The Bakuria Peace Camp in Georgia<sup>46</sup> and Summer Peace Camp in Bulgaria<sup>47</sup> were established to promote tolerance and encourage the establishment of new relationships among children and teenagers from different conflict zones. Both programs use sport and recreation to develop team spirit in participating children and teenagers. Developing team spirit helps to remove the psychological barriers that hinder the creation of relationships among them, and helps to spread the spirit of peace-building and tolerance. Through these activities, the programs hope to achieve psychological and social rehabilitation of refugee children and youth.

### **Providing an alternative to participation in criminal gangs and armed militia**

In many communities, criminal gangs, paramilitary organizations, and armed factions actively recruit disaffected, abandoned, or homeless young people. Here, well-designed sport activities can provide an attractive alternative for young people seeking to make friends, build their sense of self-esteem and self-confidence, and find a positive direction in their lives.

As an integral and valued part of youth culture, sport can be the ideal enticement, attracting and helping youngsters learn about relationships and conflict resolution and develop life skills. To be effective, however, these programs must be focused on the whole youth (not just their sport skills), explicitly promote positive values (such as cooperation, teamwork, fairness and respect for opponents), and empower youth by helping them to set goals, make effective choices, practice responsibility and leadership, and contribute.<sup>48,49</sup> For this reason, programs that are purely recreational or focus only on sport skills, like basketball shooting and passing, are unlikely to be effective.

Research undertaken in the United States indicates that sport programs have the potential to help youth who live in under-served neighborhoods to overcome the root problems associated with poverty and crime.<sup>50</sup> This is only true, however, when explicit values that emphasize personal and social development are built into the program.<sup>51</sup> Placing these types of values at the centre of programs makes them more effective at combating "street" messages and involvement with gangs, violence, and drugs, as well as the incidence of teenage pregnancy.<sup>52</sup>

Research conducted by the Australian Institute of Criminology on the use of sport for youth crime prevention has shown that sport and physical activity can combine with other interventions to reduce crime in particular groups and communities, as long as programs provide accessible, appropriate activities in a supportive social context. In other words, sport and physical activity must be connected positively within the social fabric of groups and communities, and sport-based interventions must be carried out in collaboration with a range of other strategies and sectors.<sup>53</sup>

The Complexo de Maré neighbourhood of Rio de Janeiro offers a compelling example of this approach. The neighbourhood is divided into territories controlled by rival gangs. Drug trafficking, related violence and other criminal activity are highly visible and many youth believe gangs are their best option for social and economic advancement. The *Luta Pela Paz (Fight for Peace)* program was established to offer youth an alternative to drugs, gangs and violence. The program's primary activity is a boxing club, but it also offers access to education and work opportunities, youth leadership training, and social action. Boxing was deliberately chosen for its appeal to male youth attracted to gangs, because it is a good means to channel frustration, and because it offers a relevant entry point for discussions about violence. Sixty percent of the program's trainers are former participants, bringing the credibility and insights of their own experience to the program. Regular boxing tournaments allow participants to publicly compete and gain respect, something the program's founder believes they otherwise could only have gained by picking up a gun.<sup>54</sup>

Youth in crisis zones are exposed to similar risks of involvement in armed groups and militia. According to the recent Report of the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, "[t]housands of children continue to be abducted to serve as soldiers, spies, messengers, servants and sexual slaves with armed forces and groups. Poverty, propaganda and ideology continue to drive the involvement of children in many conflict areas."<sup>55</sup>

While in many cases children and youth are forced to serve in armed groups, in others they are recruited. Displacement separates families and deprives children of a secure environment. The destruction of schools and the displacement of teachers reduces access to schooling and leaves children at further risk of recruitment.<sup>56</sup> Sport can play a role in reducing their vulnerability to recruitment by providing a reason for young people to stay in their existing communities. Sport for peace initiatives can also help children and youth to adopt a more critical perspective with regard to their own involvement in conflict and to envision alternative peaceful ways in which they can play a valued social role and achieve a sense of belonging and purpose.

Since 2003, the crisis in Darfur has displaced an estimated 1.6 million people and caused over 210,000 refugees to cross the border into Eastern Chad. There, inter-ethnic clashes

and scarce resources have led to increasing numbers of internally displaced Chadians. In the refugee camps, it is difficult to keep children and youth occupied, making them vulnerable to enrollment in armed factions. International humanitarian organization Right To Play's *SportWorks Chad* program<sup>57</sup> uses sport and play programs to improve health and build life skills among children in participating refugee camps and host communities. Games and activities promote peace-building and community cohesion and teach conflict resolution skills, focusing on teamwork, fair play, and inclusion and integration of different ethnic groups. Special community play days are organized with "No Winner, No Loser" competitions that encourage the spirit of peace and fair play and often feature peaceful messages from influential religious, traditional or local authorities. To date, more than 400 local coaches have been trained and they lead regular sport and play activities for 7,716 children and youth. The activities provide participants with a more structured and normalized environment as well as opportunities to develop peace-building skills. This has led to increased school enrollment and fewer youth joining armed groups, because they are reluctant to give up their sport activities.

### **Strengthening indigenous culture**

Indigenous people in developed and developing nations are often marginalized as a result of histories of colonization, attempts to force their cultural assimilation, and being deprived of traditional lands and resources. There is growing evidence that cultural continuity is critical to restoring the social, economic and spiritual health of Aboriginal communities.<sup>58</sup> Sport and games centred on traditional skills and culturally-based principles play an important role in Aboriginal culture and can therefore contribute to this process.

A review of research undertaken by the Australian Sports Commission confirms that sport offers particular benefits with regard to Aboriginal communities.<sup>59</sup> Sport carnivals organized by local indigenous communities have been described as pivotal events for social and traditional cohesion, largely because they are organized and managed by indigenous communities themselves.<sup>60</sup> Volunteer involvement in sport events and activities contributes to social cohesion as individuals get involved in coaching, umpiring, administration, management, and equipment and facilities maintenance. Volunteers acquire employment skills and a sense of purpose, while participants and volunteers benefit from enhanced self-esteem because of their involvement.<sup>61</sup>

Restoring indigenous games as part of the spectrum of publicly supported sport activity is an important means of supporting Aboriginal cultural renewal because these help strengthen young people's knowledge of their heritage and traditional games. The Brazilian Ministry of Sport supports the Indigenous Peoples Games<sup>62</sup> as a means of showcasing and celebrating the traditional sport and cultural activities of native Brazilians and

building pride in their traditions. The Government of South Africa also supports indigenous games, and Mozambique is in the process of planning an annual festival of traditional games. The North American Indigenous Games, which takes place every three years, combines indigenous sports with other popular sports. The goal of the games is “to improve the quality of life for indigenous peoples by supporting self-determined sport and cultural activities.”<sup>63</sup>

### **Empowering homeless people**

Although homelessness may not be immediately recognized as a peace-building issue, homeless people can face the same forms of social exclusion as asylum seekers and refugees. Issues of homelessness can also affect a nation’s progress toward peace and prosperity and generate conflicts at the local level.

Homeless people often face multiple challenges which, in combination, make it difficult for them to secure and keep safe and adequate housing. Without a fixed address, they are often unable to qualify for public services, to secure employment or attend school as a means to improve their condition. Many suffer from addictions and chronic low self-esteem. Efforts to help the homeless find secure housing and employment must therefore adopt a holistic approach that addresses these underlying issues. The need to address the structural causes of homelessness is equally important. Inadequate public investment in affordable housing, income security programs, and addiction treatment and rehabilitation are just a few of the possible causes for homelessness in a society. Addressing these and other structural factors greatly increases the chances that community programs to assist the homeless will be successful.

The Homeless World Cup is the best known example of the use of sport to reintegrate homeless people into society. The event draws public attention to the structural causes of homelessness, and empowers homeless people themselves to become effective advocates for social change. A professionally run, high-profile annual event, the Homeless World Cup is an international football tournament attracting teams of homeless athletes from over 48 developing and developed countries. The purpose of the event is to engage and assist homeless people from around the world and to help reconnect them to society by changing their own and other people’s perceptions of their capacities. Once a venue is chosen through a bidding process, the Cup is advertised, playing spaces are built in the streets, and stands are constructed for spectators. Games are played every day for a week. Crowds are attracted by the fast, dynamic games, but also by the unusual and moving sight of homeless people proudly representing their countries. Over 100,000 spectators attended the 2006 Cape Town Homeless World Cup in South Africa.

The Homeless World Cup Foundation's own research shows that 77% of players involved change their lives significantly in the long term. Homeless participants are involved in planning, working and playing together, and each is assigned an important role and the opportunity to develop and display their capacities. Being part of a team, especially a team that competes internationally, helps players take a more positive view of their own strengths and abilities. It also enables players to learn or re-learn important life skills, such as tackling difficult challenges, recovering from losses and setbacks, and exercising personal responsibility. All participants must obtain their own passports and visas, a process that helps their re-socialization. In this way, sport and belonging to a team build participants' confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. In the words of one participant: "Today, someone came and wanted my autograph — it's pretty cool to be someone's hero."<sup>64</sup> The success of the event has allowed organizers to leverage its popularity to ensure that visas will be issued to all participants, a significant achievement with respect to homeless people from developing countries.

### **Reducing political tensions**

Many conflicts within countries are linked to partisan politics and the competition between rival parties. Electoral outcomes can have profound impacts on the opportunities and benefits available to specific groups in societies and tensions can therefore run high in the lead-up to elections. While Ghana is not a country that typically suffers from serious conflict, tensions have nonetheless arisen. In the past, the government has organized UN-sponsored Global Peace Games to bring rival factions together and to defuse tensions. As some tensions are expected in the lead-up to the 2008 national election, the government plans to build on this experience and organize Global Peace Games, refereed by celebrity athletes, to encourage friendly competition between political parties.

*"You don't wait for peace in order to use sport for peace. You can use sport to achieve peace."*

- Shimon Peres, Athens Roundtable on Sport for Development and Peace, 2004.

## **2.2 USING SPORT IN PERIODS OF CONFLICT**

The use of sport to advance peace in conflict situations must always take into account what is realistically achievable — not just through sport — but by any means. Basic security and self-preservation concerns, as well as difficulty in transport and communication, can make everyday activities nearly impossible in conflict zones. As a result, most sport-based peace-building initiatives are established in the post-conflict phase, where objectives can be more comprehensive and programs have a reasonable chance

of being successful. However, examples of interventions during conflict do exist. These are necessarily less ambitious and need to be considered in this light.

In periods of short-term conflict, sport-based initiatives may be limited to providing people with temporary relief from the tensions and concerns they are experiencing. During longer, more protracted conflicts, peace-building is more likely to succeed when conflicting communities have begun to re-establish positive contact while fighting is still underway.<sup>65</sup> Sport-based initiatives can be one means of establishing and re-establishing relationships and nurturing points of communication that can eventually serve the peace process. Use of sport for more complex networking and peace-building efforts, however, is extremely difficult in high-intensity conflicts and generally cannot be undertaken until conflicts have subsided.

The following sub-sections provide examples of how sport is being used to provide respite from conflict and to build bridges to a more peaceful future.

### **Providing respite in the midst of conflict**

On rare occasions, sport can provide a respite from war and briefly open a window for temporary aid and humanitarian relief for civilians during conflicts. Perhaps the best known example of this is the Olympic Truce. During the 1994 Lillehammer Olympic Games, conflict in Bosnia ceased long enough to permit the inoculation of 10,000 Bosnian children and a ceasefire between the Sudanese government and an armed opposition group was secured.

Most recently, an Asian Cup football victory brought momentary social cohesion in the midst of widespread factional violence in Iraq. The potential of this moment was not lost on a 25-year-old Iraqi who noted: "In 90 minutes, 11 men on a soccer pitch thousands of miles away have made millions of Iraqis happy while 250 MPs, our government, the mullahs, imams and warlords can't provide us with a single smile. I hope this is a turning point for our country."<sup>66</sup> This sentiment was echoed by another Iraqi observer following the much publicized match: "Football alone may not be able to heal the nation's deep wounds, but for the moment it has induced a sense of cohesion, and we can all build on that if we try."<sup>67</sup>

At the community level, regular, organized sport activity in a safe and supervised setting can provide an important island of healthy, secure, stress-free enjoyment for people of all ages in conflict situations. This is particularly true for children, who may be more easily traumatized by the turmoil around them. Because parents are trying to protect their children from the effects of conflict, community-level programs that bring children

together in this manner may be somewhat easier to organize than those for adults who may be averse to participating in cross-factional activity.

### **Sport as a bridge between opposing groups**

Sport can be used to create bridges and sustain positive relationships between individuals on opposing sides of a conflict through outreach to participants from these different communities. Research supports the power of sport to create “relational spaces” across wide and diverse populations.<sup>68</sup> This can take place at the community or elite level. One expert stresses the importance of creating safe and accessible social spaces, such as youth football clubs.<sup>69</sup> However, the success of such programs depends on the quality and nature of the contact. To successfully reduce inter-group prejudices, sport for peace initiatives must promote equal status, cooperation and common goals, and reward moments of cross-community intimacy.<sup>70</sup> For example, *Football4Peace* is a sport-based project for Jewish and Arab children in Northern Israel, which operates under a framework of neutrality, equity and inclusion, respect, trust, and responsibility. Under this framework, common goals and rewards are built into the game structure.<sup>71</sup>

The Cross Cultures Project Association (CCPA) is a humanitarian organization which develops and implements cross-cultural projects to promote reconciliation and integration through dialogue and collaboration. One of its projects, *Open Fun Football Schools*,<sup>72</sup> brought together teachers, instructors, trainers and children from different ethnic and social backgrounds in Bosnia-Herzegovina to promote social unity and democratic behaviour through grassroots football. An independent donor evaluation concluded that *Open Fun Football Schools* has established, “in very sensitive areas, the first significant, post-war contacts between municipalities experiencing serious ethnic tension and antagonism.”<sup>73</sup>

In 2006, CCPA trained seven Iraqi coaches in the principles and methods of its *Open Fun Football Schools*. These coaches have since organized five football schools, reaching a total of 1,000 boys of mixed ethnicity in Baghdad neighborhoods. They have also trained 16 more coaches to build on their initial effort.<sup>74</sup> Because of the intensity of the conflict in Baghdad, the expectations for these projects are less ambitious than for other *Cross Cultures* projects and achievements are difficult to monitor. However, efforts are being made to provide a safe space for children to enjoy regular physical activity away from the pressures and fears of the conflict. By fostering relationships between children of different ethnicities and religious communities the projects are also helping to build bridges between these communities at the individual level.

Elite athletes, coaches and sporting events naturally attract media and public attention. High-profile athletes from conflict zones can bring international attention to raging conflicts and provide examples of working together across the divide, as part of their own sporting activities or through specially organized events. For example, leading international football club Real Madrid was brought to Israel by the Peres Centre for Peace to play a match against a mixed Israeli-Palestinian squad. The goal was to focus attention on local peace efforts and communicate a strong peace message. People remember the image from the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games of North and South Korean athletes entering the Olympic Stadium under one flag for the first time in decades. The flag, held by one athlete from North Korea and one athlete from South Korea, represented all of Korea, with a white background and a blue map outlining the entire Korean peninsula.

Sport is often used as an opener by international peace-keeping forces when they are stationed in a new conflict zone. Peace-keepers often coordinate sporting activities with the local population at the start of missions to reduce fear and mistrust, build goodwill, and open doors to communication.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, peace-keepers have used organized sporting events to promote peace among the local population. In August 2004, when the Brazilian National soccer team travelled to Port au Prince to play a game against the Haitian National soccer team, Brazilian peace-keepers stationed on the island handed out tickets to the match in exchange for firearms. The effort to disarm local factions in the country garnered the attention of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, who applauded the act as one of the most important initiatives of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001–2010.<sup>76</sup>

Sport's use as a bridge sometimes arises spontaneously, without organizational leadership or design. The Brezovica ski resort in Kosovo has long been a place for ethnic Serbs and Albanians to interact and share their enjoyment of the outdoors, prompting a UN publication to state: "...Brezovica wins this year's peace prize for an almost spontaneous growth of multi-ethnic recreation."<sup>77</sup> Programs were later established to promote multi-ethnic relations, building on this natural foundation.<sup>78</sup>

Spontaneous gestures sometimes grow into larger sport for peace initiatives. For example, in the midst of the Gaza crisis in the summer of 2007, an 85-year-old Jewish surfer from Hawaii who introduced surfing to Israel in the 1950s, delivered 12 surfboards to the small, but committed, surfing community in Gaza. Three weeks earlier he had read a US newspaper article describing Gaza surfers working with poor equipment. One Voice, an Israeli/Palestinian conflict resolution organization, made contact with the Palestinian surfers and negotiated the transfer of the boards with the Israeli military authorities responsible for border control. One of the Palestinian surfers, a Gaza beach lifeguard,

said “when I touched those boards I felt a joy I cannot describe.” He hopes to train on the coast, sponsored by an Israeli partner in the initiative, so that he can teach surfing to Palestinian youth.

This project attracted significant media coverage in the United States and in the Middle East<sup>79</sup> and led to the creation of *Surfers for Peace*, a joint Palestinian/Israeli initiative to mobilize the surfing community, including its elite athletes, to unite one million Palestinians and Israelis in support of a peace settlement in the region. The *Surfers for Peace* initiative is an example of how sport can be used to give a human face to those on opposing sides of a conflict leveraging the pre-existing, shared identity of the surfing community, one which (at least in the western world) has a broad symbolic association with peace.

### 2.3 USING SPORT TO BUILD PEACE IN POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Most sport for peace activities take place in a post-conflict setting. Their focus is on reconciliation between victims and perpetrators and formerly hostile communities; rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants; and, to a more limited extent, reconstruction of the social, political, and economic infrastructure. The following sub-sections provide examples of the use of sport to achieve each of these aims.

#### **Reconciliation**

The goal of reconciliation is to establish the minimum level of trust necessary to foster cooperation and mutual reliance among former enemies. It is a long and difficult process which demands changes in attitudes (e.g., tolerance instead of revenge), in conduct (e.g., joint commemoration of the dead instead of separate partisan memorials), and in the institutional environment (e.g., integrating veterans from both sides of the conflict in the national army instead of keeping ex-combatants in quasi-private militias).<sup>80</sup>

The handbook on Reconciliation after Violent Conflict published by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance identifies three stages of reconciliation:

- replacing fear with non-violent co-existence;
- building confidence and trust; and
- moving toward empathy.<sup>81</sup>

Each of these stages is achieved through four main processes: healing of survivors, historical accounting through truth-telling, retributive or restorative justice, and reparation of material and psychological damage inflicted on victims.<sup>82</sup> These are inter-related and mutually reinforcing processes.

Sport for peace initiatives are particularly effective in helping to build confidence and trust between opposing parties and advancing the healing process. Healing comprises strategies, processes and activities aimed at improving the psychological health of individuals or rehabilitating and reconstructing local and national communities.<sup>83</sup> Building trust requires that each party — victim and offender — gains renewed confidence in himself or herself and in each other. Building trust also entails seeing the humanity in every individual. This acknowledgement is the basis for the mutual trust required to build a lasting culture of peace.<sup>84</sup>

Sport can help advance this process by virtue of its far-reaching appeal and its ability to create new, shared identities that transcend the lines that divide societies. This dimension of sport has long been appreciated by nations and used to foster positive feelings of national identity, pride, and unity in the face of internal political and ethno-cultural divisions. In this respect, sport has been particularly important to emerging nations trying to forge a new identity internally and with the rest of the world. Sport has also been used for the same purpose by sub-national groups seeking independence, and “bottom-up” efforts have often proven more effective than “top-down” state-led initiatives at making use of sport’s power to create and strengthen group identities.<sup>85</sup>

In the context of peace-building, sport offers a means to create positive new shared identities among formerly opposing groups in order to build a solid foundation for a peaceful future. The successful use of sport as a ritual for this shared identity-building relies on cultural sensitivity and the use of symbols that are meaningful to those involved in the reconciliation process.<sup>86</sup> In some circumstances, the appropriate ritual activity will be team sports such as football, cricket, basketball, or baseball. In others, it may be individual sports such as long distance running, boxing or judo. In certain circumstances indigenous sports will be more suitable.

In Cambodia, after years of civil war, the *Cambodian National Volleyball League (Disabled)* has contributed to the healing process by engaging formerly hostile factions.<sup>87</sup> Matches between integrated teams of ex-Khmer Rouge soldiers and civilians recently attracted media attention. Participants interviewed before the match indicated that they were focusing on the opportunity that the match presented for positive interaction, not the past. The match has inspired many more positive interactions between these two groups off the playing field.

In South Africa, apartheid has ended but its effects are still felt in a society that remains heavily divided by race and social class. PeacePlayers International — South Africa (PPI-SA)<sup>88</sup> established the *Bridging Divides Program* to break down race barriers, educate children

about health issues, and provide alternatives to crime in the KwaZulu-Natal province.<sup>89</sup> The program brings together children and youth from different backgrounds to play basketball and forge positive relationships that transcend race, culture and religion. Young adults benefit from a *Leadership Development Program* that empowers them to make positive change in their communities and the lives of children they work with.

Since 2000, PPI-SA has taught basketball to over 25,000 children; involved 7,000 boys and girls in inter-community leagues, life skills clinics, court launches, tournaments and clubs; and trained and employed 2,000 young South African adults as coaches and mentors. An external evaluation of this program concluded that it contributed noticeably to breaking down racial stereotypes and divides<sup>90</sup> and that school and sport contexts provided the most favourable environments for multicultural mixing.<sup>91</sup> Parents and school principals understood that the program's goals extended beyond sport delivery and rated the program as highly successful with regard to its objectives.<sup>92</sup>

Building empathy is an essential stage in the reconciliation process. Empathy comes with the willingness of victims to listen to offenders' reasons for causing them pain, and with offenders' listening to and understanding the anger and bitterness of those they have hurt.<sup>93</sup> Truth-telling is one way to make this possible, creating "objective opportunities for people to see the past in terms of shared suffering and collective responsibility."<sup>94</sup> It also helps victims and offenders to recognize their shared humanity and the reality that they all have to move forward by getting along with each other.<sup>95</sup>

Sport can be used to build empathy and as an information platform to inform people of, and promote, truth telling processes. In 1996, the Youth Sports Association in Kigali established the *Espérance* community sports club to foster healing and reconstruction following the 1994 Rwandan genocide. *Espérance* uses football to develop young people's capacity to resolve conflict peacefully and as a forum for education on peace, health, and human rights issues. In addition to other activities, sport events are used to publicize the *Gacaca*, a community justice process instituted by the government in 2001 to reconstruct what happened during the genocide; speed up legal proceedings; and aid the process of reconciliation. *Espérance* uses its outreach activities to raise awareness of the system and its benefits to communities.

Sport can also play a role in promoting healing through remembrance. Remembrance is an essential process because it publicly acknowledges the pain of victims, invites offenders to take responsibility for their actions, and offers a means to understand, learn from the past, and build a lasting reconciliation.<sup>96</sup> To advance reconciliation, it is necessary to create opportunities for shared commemoration that is non-partisan and involves

people from all sides of a conflict. The alternative (relying on separate memorials and remembrance rituals) risks allowing wounds from the conflict to fester, which may cause renewed conflict in the future.

In Rwanda, the annual Great Lakes Region Invitational Basketball Tournament is hosted in memory of Gisémbé Ntarugera Emmanuel, a well-known basketball player killed during the 1994 genocide.<sup>97</sup> The tournament attracts men's and women's teams from neighbouring Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and serves as a remembrance activity with community theatre performances, visits to genocide museums, and public speeches. The tournament brings together inter-ethnic teams, using competition in a friendly environment to reinforce the shared identity of former opposing groups. It engages all sides in commemorating the Rwandan genocide in an effort to ensure it is never repeated.

A group of school children in Beijing, China smile and wave peace signs after participating in a specially-designed sport and play program.

Right To Play



**Rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants<sup>98</sup>**

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants is a three-step, post-conflict process aimed at turning soldiers into civilians. The process is considered essential to peace-building.<sup>99</sup> Sport for peace initiatives are used for demobilization and disarmament, but most frequently for reintegration.

In periods of demobilization, sport is particularly useful when soldiers are in camps, especially for long periods, because it offers a healthy and entertaining way to pass the time during long periods of inactivity.<sup>100</sup> This helps to prevent fights and other disruptions from breaking out. With respect to disarmament, sport is used along with other incentives — such as car raffles and livestock — to induce former combatants to turn in their weapons in post-conflict zones. The famous Brazil-Haiti soccer match in Port au Prince in August 2004 — where prized tickets were exchanged for firearms as part of an effort to disarm rival factions in the country — is a prime example.

The reintegration of ex-combatants once they are demobilized and disarmed is a particularly challenging process. This challenge is greatest when ex-combatants are known to have committed atrocities in host communities. Reintegration requires that ex-combatants relinquish their military identity as their primary identity and learn to build a new identity linked to qualities and accomplishments valued in civilian life. Sport for peace initiatives can be helpful in this process. By mixing ex-combatants and non-combatants on the same teams, sport-based initiatives can help to replace military affiliations with new team-based bonds and relationships. The identities and status that ex-combatants derived from their military rank and prowess are replaced by community status gained through sport skills and accomplishments.

Sport also provides an important means for community members, once subjugated by armed combatants, to establish peer-to-peer relationships with ex-combatants based on equality instead of force. This is an important process for community members and ex-combatants alike. Where respect was formerly commanded at the point of a gun, it must now be earned on the playing field with everyone on an equal footing.

The reintegration of former child combatants poses particular challenges because children and youth have often been severely traumatized by their experiences. This issue is identified in Chapter 3 in relation to the psychosocial health of children and youth. It is also integral to reconciliation efforts because successful demobilization and reintegration can help to prevent continuing cycles of violence.<sup>101</sup>

Child soldier demobilization and reintegration during and after conflict is a complex and challenging process. The situation of girls in particular continues to require advocacy

and new approaches. As disarmament and demobilization programs are implemented, it is difficult to identify and gain access to women and girls who may have been abducted and taken as “wives” or dependants of the combatants. These women, girls and their children, often referred to as “camp followers,” move from place to place with their abductors, perpetuating a cycle of dependence.<sup>102</sup>

World Vision International’s *Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace Project* (YRTEP)<sup>103</sup> in Sierra Leone uses football, in addition to dances and a confession process, to help ex-combatant youth reintegrate into their communities.<sup>104</sup> The project was designed to provide non-formal education activities to 45,000 youth affected by the war — approximately half of whom are ex-combatants. On the first day of the process, ex-combatants and villagers play football on opposing teams. On the second day, ex-combatants participate in a confession process and a second match is played with the same teams. On the third day, ex-combatants and villagers play football again, but on integrated teams. This is followed by a three-month comprehensive training program for ex-combatants and non-combatants in areas such as: reintegration and sensitization for ex-combatants; vocational and life skills counselling; livelihood skills development; environmental protection; health; peace and conflict prevention education; and functional literacy and numeracy.<sup>105</sup> At the end of this period, the process is repeated.

While it is difficult to isolate the effect of the sport component of the program, the programs’ coordinator believes it has played a significant role in their 94% self-reported success rate. An independent external evaluation confirms that the program is meeting its objectives and making a significant difference in the lives of the young people participating, who feel they are accomplishing things that would not have been possible without the program.<sup>106</sup> Participants reported decreased violence on the part of youth who participated and improved functioning in the community.<sup>107</sup>

### **Reconstruction**

The use of sport for reconstruction has been largely focused on mine risk education (MRE) in post-conflict zones. This is accomplished through a variety of means, including using high-profile celebrity athletes as spokespeople and role models, using sport clubs as teaching platforms to communicate critical mine safety information to children, train coaches and physical education teachers in MRE, and integrating MRE into national physical education curricula.

The International Red Cross uses high-profile soccer celebrities to raise awareness and resources for the removal of land mines, as does UNICEF’s *Spirit of Soccer* (SOS) campaign in the former Yugoslavia, which combines football games with education on the dangers of land mines. *Spirit of Soccer*, now in its tenth year of programming, uses coaching clinics

(mainly soccer), physical education teacher-training programs, sport celebrity posters and a sport re-equipping campaign to spread its messages about mine risks and mine-safe behaviour. SOS implemented its first project in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1996–1998, providing 7,500 children with sports and mine awareness training. In 1999 and 2000, these activities were extended to 2,000 children in Kosovo, where 5,000 mine awareness posters featuring football players like Ronaldo De Lima were also distributed.

Further programming has reached another 15,000 children and youth through 106 soccer clubs, schools, and children's organizations.<sup>108</sup> These successful activities were subsequently introduced into school curricula, are being incorporated into the Faculty of Physical Education curriculum at the University of Sarajevo, and will receive funding and recognition in the Federal Ministry of Sport's policy on physical education for young people.<sup>109</sup>

### 3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENTS

The use of sport to prevent conflict and advance peace is a relatively new field and evidence-based guidance with respect to policies and programs is limited. However, from 1993 to early 2003, an experience-based learning initiative, the *Reflecting on Peace Practice Project*,<sup>110</sup> engaged more than 200 agencies and many individuals working on conflict around the world in a collaborative effort to learn how to improve the effectiveness of peace practice. The results of this research are summarized in "*Reflecting on Peace Practice Project 2004*."<sup>111</sup>

Many of the key findings from this project are aimed at international NGOs and international development agencies operating in conflict zones. However, the lessons are also useful to governments seeking to establish sport for peace initiatives in their own countries. Many of the recommendations that follow are derived from this work and are aimed at project and program implementation, rather than the policy level. Because most programs will involve governments working with local, NGO or multilateral partners, recommendations are generally targeted to governments and these partners.

It is important to remember that sport for peace initiatives can have diverse objectives. As is the case with any recommendations, when applying Sport for Peace recommendations to policies and interventions, their contexts should be considered.

### 3.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Reference the use of sport to prevent conflict and build peace in national Sport for Development policies and in international development policies related to peace-building.

Different governments will see value in different applications of sport for peace purposes — for instance, reintegration of former combatants, support for excluded groups, conflict prevention among refugee populations, or post-conflict reconciliation. Explicit reference to these uses of sport, however, will help to raise awareness of sport's potential and facilitate the integration of sport into broader government strategies.

#### Include sport as a tool in government strategies, to address the challenges confronting excluded populations and to prevent conflicts arising from these challenges.

Both developed and developing countries can benefit from a more systematic use of sport to build human and social capital in communities and provide marginalized individuals with experiences to enhance their health, self-esteem, life skills, employability, and social integration. Systematic approaches require targeted, resourced and sustained programs that are integrated at the policy level into broader government strategies. Such approaches must also allow for integration at the community level with related initiatives and organizations working to address the specific issues confronting excluded groups in their communities.

#### Review the use of sport for nation-building purposes to ensure that the messages conveyed are peaceful and conducive to preventing conflict both within and outside the country.

Competition is an essential dimension of all high-performance sport and a spur to excellence. However, the use of high-performance sport and athletes as tools to promote negative feelings toward opposing groups or nations undermines the spirit of international sport events. A negative approach and negative values erodes the capacity of sport to generate benefits at the community level. Sport for Development and Peace works only when governments send a consistent message about the positive values that sport represents.

#### Observe the Olympic Truce.

Governments, as members of the UN General Assembly, can call on and encourage armed opposition groups involved in conflict, without prejudice to their legal status, to respect the Olympic Truce.

## 3.2 PRPGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

**Ensure an effective sport for peace program focus by first undertaking a context analysis that answers the following questions:<sup>112</sup>**

**What is this conflict not about?** Identify areas where competing groups agree, share common beliefs, and continue to interact so that programs can build on these commonalities. Avoid easy or popular assumptions about the nature of the conflict because those assumptions may be wrong (e.g., inaccurately characterizing competition for resources as a religious conflict).

**What needs to be stopped?** Every conflict includes actions, situations and dynamics that must be stopped or interrupted to de-escalate conflict and restore peace (e.g., recruitment of young people into militia, arms trade, exploitation of natural resources to support armed factions, misuse of the media for propaganda purposes, or funding from diaspora groups). Identify contributing factors and the groups who are likely to resist changes.

**What are the regional and international dimensions of this conflict?** Forces outside the immediate local context (village, province, nation) can affect the conflict and these influences should be addressed.

The information gathered through this process can be used to identify a suitable program focus (including issues and participants), priorities, strategic points of intervention, and should help program organizers to match available skills and resources to the situation. It is important to avoid partial analyses based on pre-set theories of change and peace-building models, or analyses conducted from a distance with limited local input. This will distort the focus of initiatives and impede their effectiveness.<sup>113</sup>

**Understand how the sport for peace initiative will contribute to broader conflict prevention and/or peace-building strategies for the community/region/country before it is launched.**

Initiatives that are linked to larger strategies are more likely to have an impact on peace. All sport for peace initiatives become part of the context where the conflict is occurring and are therefore not neutral. Initiatives impact *dividers* — factors that are causing tension or that people are fighting about, and *connectors* — factors that bring people together and/or reduce tension. Sport for peace initiatives must be clear about the impact they are having and whether or not they are increasing or reducing dividers and connectors.<sup>114</sup>

**Consider whether it is appropriate or beneficial to coordinate with other peace partners before launching a program.**

It may not be feasible for a single program to engage all identified target groups or issues. In many cases, it may be more beneficial to coordinate with other peace partners who

are better placed or equipped. Coordination can overcome the tendency among many peace initiatives to focus uniquely on children, health workers, NGOs, church groups, etc. Coordination promotes the development of an overall strategy which addresses more difficult to reach groups, such as combatants and ex-combatants.<sup>115</sup>

### Consider gender impacts and ensure girls and women are fully included in all peace initiatives because they are key stakeholders in the peace-building process.

Many programs encounter cultural and religious barriers that make it challenging to reach women and girls. However many programs have been able to gradually overcome these obstacles. The football club *Espérance* in Rwanda, for example, has established a *Football for Peace* program based on a Brazilian model, where only girls can score goals. *Espérance* reports that initial resistance toward girls and women participating in sports has been overcome, with female attendance (including mothers and grandmothers) at events increasing from almost none to over 50% of spectators on some occasions. The program builds the skills and self-esteem of girls, improves boys' perceptions of girls' capacities, and provides women with opportunities for social interaction outside the home and a chance to actively participate in community peace-building dialogue and activities. *Espérance* engages women on multiple levels and contributes to their empowerment as essential stakeholders in the peace-building process.

### Address conflict and peace-building at the socio-political level and the individual level.

Research has shown that peace programs that focus only on change at the individual level, without linking or translating this into action at the socio-political level, have no discernible effect on peace. Programs that build trust and relationships across conflict lines may have a transformative effect on individuals' attitudes, perceptions and trust, but broader peace impacts are much greater when these personal transformations are linked to socio-political action.<sup>116</sup> The *Rebuilding the Community* component of the Peres Centre for Peace's *Twinned Peace Sports Schools* program in Israel is a good example of this. This integral aspect of a broader sports program works to empower young Palestinians and Israelis, fosters their community awareness, and encourages activism for positive change.

### Engage key people and larger target populations in sport for peace initiatives.

Approaches that concentrate on reaching large numbers of people but ignore key leaders and decision-makers and, conversely, approaches that target key leaders while ignoring the grassroots, have limited impact. Programs which address both groups through coordinated

strategies are more effective. Social change processes in general are most effective when they link the “grassroots,” or community level, to the “grassstops,” or leadership and decision-making level.<sup>117</sup> A dynamic exchange between the two is a necessary part of the process. For example, the association of many sport for peace programs with elite athletes creates a unique opportunity to mix “key people” with “more people.” Elite athletes not only attract a great deal of attention, but they also often have leverage with other key people in society. For example, key people have been incorporated into the *Football4Peace* program by bringing Arab and Jewish Israeli community leaders to the UK from Israel for training purposes. Similarly, *Open Fun Football Schools* in Bosnia-Herzegovina work with municipal leaders from opposing ethnic communities as a means of securing their commitment to administer and help fund joint children’s football programs that reach thousands of children and their families.

Sport for peace initiatives, that work on multiple levels (socio-political levels and individual levels) and embrace key people and large numbers of people, are likely to have the greatest impact. All sport for peace initiatives can be plotted on a simple matrix (see Figure 6.3) that represents the two axes mentioned above. Many programs operate in only one quadrant, while others may evolve to move into additional quadrants over time — either through direct action or indirectly through partnerships and coordinated support to other organizations and groups. Wherever a project is located on the matrix, organizations need to ask themselves who, and to what level, needs to be affected to produce significant change.<sup>118</sup>

**FIGURE 6.3 PEACE-BUILDING MATRIX**

	<b>MORE PEOPLE</b>	<b>KEY PEOPLE</b>
<b>INDIVIDUAL LEVEL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All former child combatants</li> <li>• Families of former child combatants</li> <li>• Other community members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community leaders</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Coaches and top athletes</li> <li>• Heads of relevant NGOs/ UN/Gov’t organizations</li> </ul>
<b>SOCIO-POLITICAL LEVEL</b>	Advocate for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs for ex-child combatants</li> <li>• Alternative education opportunities</li> <li>• More international focus on child protection measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minister of Youth</li> <li>• Minister of Education</li> <li>• Minister of Sport</li> <li>• Minister of Employment</li> <li>• Elite athlete ambassadors</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, *Reflecting on Peace Practice Project*<sup>119</sup>

### Work with partners in a way that sends a positive ethical message to participating communities.

Implicit ethical messages transmitted by the way a government, agency or NGO works can send as strong a signal as the program itself. Attention must be paid to ensuring that the message sent is the right one.<sup>120</sup>

### Adapt and apply the principle of “do no harm” in all sport for peace initiatives.

Peace-building, by its nature, takes place in volatile and unpredictable environments. Sport for peace initiatives may be affected by forces beyond the control of program designers, or by simple human errors. Faulty projects can harm people by making a conflict situation worse. Research has shown that negative impacts from peace projects fall into six main categories (as outlined below). By adopting the principle of “do no harm,” each of the negative impacts can be weighed, giving systematic attention to understanding a conflict, its causes, actors, and dynamics.<sup>121</sup> Sport for peace actors can develop a balanced assessment of the negative and positive effects of actions at all levels,<sup>122</sup> and avoid making costly mistakes that are harmful to those they are trying to help:

**Worsening divisions between conflicting groups.** Programs can make divisions between groups worse by confirming or reinforcing prejudice, discrimination, or intolerance. This can result from inadequate analysis or skills, biased advocacy favouring one group, or failing to monitor the effects of bringing people together across lines of conflict. By neglecting to manage concerns and leaving them unresolved, old prejudices and divisions may be reinforced.

**Increasing danger for participants in peace activities.** Peace work can be dangerous and the people involved may be vulnerable to attack. Outside parties can increase dangers to participants by creating false expectations of security or creating additional real danger. Cooperation with outside organizations may place people in danger, or they may be lulled into a false sense of security by the apparent expertise and confidence of these organizations. Unrealistically high expectations and insufficient follow-up and support from such organizations can also expose local partners to attacks, burnout, and psychological trauma. Local and external partners need to openly discuss and analyze the differences in the risks they face and work together to prevent problems.

**Reinforcing structural or overt violence.** Peace initiatives can inadvertently reinforce asymmetries in power that underlie conflicts or legitimize structures that

systematically disadvantage certain groups. This inadvertent reinforcement usually arises from a lack of understanding about existing power structures. The effects of this reinforcement are typically problematic because they tend to favour those with power (inside or outside the country) and fail to challenge discriminatory behaviours. This results in disadvantaged groups perceiving the peace initiative as a reinforcement of the discrimination against them.

**Diverting resources from productive peace activities.** Diverting resources away from activities and resources that local people perceive to be central to conflict resolution can make peace more difficult to achieve. Outside partners often enter a situation with pre-conceived ideas they may be reluctant to relinquish even though local partners feel other issues are more central. International organizations may also hire local talent, diverting valuable resources from more productive, locally driven activities.

**Increasing cynicism.** Inadequate assessments of a situation before embarking on an initiative can set unrealistic expectations and can lead to a lack of transparency with local partners that gives rise to rumours and distrust. Cynicism can be aggravated if those in charge lack appropriate skills and training, or if old programs are simply re-labelled under the guise of peace-building to maintain funding. Thorough assessments prior to launching projects, coupled with a commitment to transparency, strong communication, and joint planning with local partners and participants can help to prevent this problem.

**Disempowering local people.** Programs that aim to empower local people can fail, or backfire, if appropriate care is not taken. Failure can result from: ignoring local priorities, engaging in redundant or unhelpful activities (as a result of not consulting local partners/participants), fostering dependency and ignoring local capacity-building opportunities, ignoring governments and creating competition between governments and/or NGOs, and not having an exit strategy that provides for a transition to sustainable local ownership of the program.

**Monitor all the variables of the program and be ready to change them to reduce possible negative impacts such as increased conflict.**

Issues pertaining to what, why, who, by whom, when, where and how — all matter to local participants and can affect the effectiveness of the program.<sup>123</sup> If any of these variables

lead to unanticipated negative impacts and aggravate existing dimensions of conflict, program designs should be changed.

### **Be aware of the contexts and vulnerabilities of certain target populations in designing and delivering sport for peace initiatives.**

Special attention needs to be paid to reintegrating child and female combatants. Children may not have any point of reference other than conflict and may not be accepted by their families. Women, in most cases, are more likely to have been the victims of sexual abuse. Cases such as these will require special attention.

### **Ensure that sport for peace activities are inclusive of persons with disabilities — particularly those with a new disability resulting from conflict.**

Persons with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in periods of conflict and ensuring their full inclusion in the community will help to reduce their vulnerability. At the same time, disability is a pervasive outcome of conflict and reintegration and healing cannot take place without addressing the needs of persons with new disabilities. Sport is an important means of helping persons with newly acquired disabilities to explore and adjust to the change in their capacities, to reduce community stigma associated with disability, and to focus the perceptions of community members and persons with disabilities on what they can do, rather than what they cannot do. Adapted sports, like sitting volleyball, that can be played by persons with and without disabilities are a powerful means of building this understanding in individuals and communities.

### **Engage parents in programs for children and youth to build their confidence in the program and to reach out to a more diverse range of beneficiaries.**

Although children represent an easy point of entry and may be the most appropriate initial targets, their parents are also important. Parents may be hard to reach because their opinions with regard to a conflict are often more entrenched than those of their children. However, changing their perceptions and engaging them in building relationships and trust across conflict divides is equally essential to the peace-building process and should be attempted. *Open Fun Football Schools*, for example, does this through workshops designed for the parents of participants. Some programs begin by inviting parents as spectators to peace-focused sport events, and then engaging them in more structured dialogue.

### **Ensure that coaches and trainers are well trained in sport, conflict management, and peace-building techniques.**

Peace-building is a complex process that requires highly skilled facilitators. Research

on effective peace programs emphasizes the importance and value of thoughtful, committed facilitators, and highlights the value of selecting and training volunteers or coaches to run the programs.<sup>124</sup> At the same time, the quality of the sport offered is equally important to building participants' skills and confidence and sustaining participation levels. Training that emphasizes the explicit integration of conflict prevention and peace-building values and messages in sport activities, combined with appropriate role model behaviour, will help to ensure a positive impact on participants.

For example, *Sport for Lebanese Children and Youth*, a sport for peace program in Lebanon, uses psychologists and education specialists to train their coaches. Other programs are directly linked to and/or created by peace-building institutions with in-house expertise in peace, conflict and mediation skills. *Twinned Peace Sports School* coaches meet monthly to discuss issues, receive guidance and socialize. *Football4Peace* has incorporated conflict resolution principles into football exercises,<sup>125</sup> and trains a mix of UK and local coaches in those principles, though local coaches may not initially be enthusiastic. One Palestinian coach admitted that he was originally only interested in the sporting components, but after seeing Palestinian and Israeli youth play together on the same teams, his opinion began to change: "I said I don't believe in peace. Maybe I do now...Maybe it's not too late for us."<sup>126</sup>

### Use existing social spaces where people cross in natural ways to leverage the inherent attraction of such spaces and the platform they provide for sport activities.

Markets, hospitals, schools, street corners, cattle dips, youth soccer clubs — the list of social spaces is long and different in every context. Social spaces can be effectively leveraged to affect the whole community.<sup>127</sup> Newly created sport spaces can be combined with other important community uses to maximize their attraction and use. In Southern Sudan, for example, a non-profit strategic design firm has proposed the construction of a football pitch which will also act as a water storage and filtration device to combat local drought conditions. The result is a social space for community interaction, economic activity and cross-cutting development activities.<sup>128</sup> Plans call for the use of shipping containers abandoned by aid agencies as water storage devices. Because these containers were also used as detention units during recent conflicts, the project has the added potential to transform negative reminders of the past conflict into sources of life and well-being.

### Aim for year-round, long-term initiatives when the objective is to change perceptions and build relationships and trust across conflict lines.

Long-term, year-round initiatives can be supplemented with, but should not be replaced by,

one-off events. Building relationships and trust in post-conflict contexts are challenging processes and require sustained long-term commitment. This is evident in programs like those delivered by *PeacePlayers International*, which aim to engage participants in year-round programs over a period of several years. In the case of the *Homeless World Cup*, a high-profile event is linked to year-round social inclusion programs that help to create positive feedback and boost the self-confidence and skills participants develop over the course of the year. The high profile of the *Homeless World Cup* also enables implementing organizations to connect with hard-to-reach potential participants because of their knowledge of, and interest in, the event.

### Capitalize on spontaneous events to mobilize longer-term sport for peace initiatives with targeted impact.

Spontaneous events can serve as a catalyst to develop longer-term sport for peace initiatives. *Surfers for Peace* is a compelling example of an effective program that arose from a spontaneous event. In the case of *Surfers for Peace*, the chance viewing of a television news story quickly grew to involve key people and institutions, as well as elite athletes, in the promotion of peace and economic opportunity.

### Respect the value of competition and build programs on the respect that competition can stimulate.

Competition in a well-managed context, especially for youth and adults, may help bonding processes and weaken the imprint of military command structures on ex-combatants. Well-designed sport programs based on the best values of sport offer a positive, healthy and peaceful alternative to armed combat as a means of achieving status in a community. Team sports can also replace military structures in creating opportunities for friendship, mutual support and belonging. For example, the *Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace Project* in Sierra Leone uses football to help ex-combatants break down identity structures tied to conflict roles and replace these with new identity structures anchored in a more positive and peaceful relationship to their communities and themselves.

### Chose the appropriate sport to use in sport for peace initiatives, giving due consideration to local socio-cultural, sport and program contexts.

Choosing an appropriate and relevant sport can positively affect the outcome of sport for peace initiatives. Key considerations include: the sport's popularity; the acceptability of girls' and women's participation; the potential for it to be adapted to include participation

by persons with disabilities; whether it is an indigenous sport; and whether it is identified with particular socio-political factions or has a history of giving rise to violent conflict. The *Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation*, for example, organizes running events for peace in African regions with a tradition of producing elite middle- and long-distance runners. *PeacePlayers International*, however, chooses not to use football in areas where it considers the sport to have a divisive history.

### Take advantage of opportunities to mobilize high-profile elite athletes to serve as public spokespeople and role models for peace.

Whether they intend to or not, celebrity athletes possess significant influence in society, particularly with regard to young people for whom they are often role models. They also possess the capacity to attract and focus national, and even global, media attention. These attributes allow them to make a powerful contribution to conflict prevention and peace initiatives. This was demonstrated by the *Peres Centre for Peace* when it arranged for a live Internet broadcast of a peace football match between Real Madrid and a team of elite Jewish Israeli and Palestinian players. This match highlighted the potential for peace between the groups-in-conflict and provided young people with an opportunity to meet their heroes and, more importantly, to hear them delivering a strong peace message. Not all athletes, however, are skilled peace-builders by nature. Peace initiatives must select athlete spokespeople whose values and behaviour are consistent with the messages they are expected to carry, and should ensure athletes are adequately trained to fulfill their role in a program.

### Target programs to the broader community, trying not to limit programs to disadvantaged populations or ex-combatants.

Success in peace-building relies on building shared identity and relationships across societal divides. Programs which target their benefits narrowly to one group because they are disadvantaged, risk perpetuating the social barriers these groups already experience. There is also a risk of creating resentment against targeted groups, in cases where they are offered benefits others are not. While some targeted interventions are always necessary, these should be combined with program elements that promote broader community involvement and participation to build relationships and trust across different groups (e.g., youth from different socio-economic backgrounds, ex-combatants and non-combatants, persons with and without disabilities, men and women, elite athletes and grassroots sport teams).

**Involve targeted beneficiaries, partners and other stakeholders in the evaluation and documentation process to increase ownership and improve the flow of honest, useful feedback between a program's stakeholders and its organizers.**

Involving beneficiaries in evaluation processes leads to a more accurate assessment of the program's strengths and weaknesses, creates more ideas for its improvement, helps to build capacity in participating individuals and organizations, and fosters more sustained participation and support. All sport for peace program participants — no matter how young — have a view on what the program means to them and its impact. *Sport for Lebanese Children and Youth Affected by Armed Conflict*, for instance, provides participating children with cameras to document their activities and present their perspective on the program's impact on their lives.

**Ensure that sport for peace initiatives are not only evaluated at the program level, but also for their impact on the peace environment at large.**

Most programs already assess the effectiveness of their activities against specific program objectives. Few, however, undertake the more difficult challenge of trying to assess what impact — if any — their initiative is having on the larger peace landscape, of which they are usually a very small part. Attempting to understand the connection between individual projects and the broader peace environment is a valuable process. It invites a more strategic approach to peace-building and compels organizations to be conscious about what they are doing and why. Often it is impossible to isolate the specific impacts of a particular program in a scientific sense. Nonetheless, the process invites reflection and offers valuable opportunities for re-assessing programs in mid-course and improving effectiveness overall.

The *Reflecting on Peace Practice Project* proposes that organizations assess the impact they are having on the broader peace environment by examining:<sup>129</sup>

- The contribution to stopping a key driving factor of the war or conflict.
- The contribution to building a momentum for peace by causing participants and communities to develop their own initiatives in relation to critical elements identified in the context analysis.
- The resulting creation or reform of political institutions to handle grievances in situations where such grievances genuinely drive the conflict.
- The potential of people to increasingly resist violence and provocations to violence.
- The resulting increase in people's security and their sense of security.

The more criteria that a sport for peace initiative meets, the more effective it will be in advancing peace on the broader scale, in addition to the benefits it offers to participating individuals and communities.

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