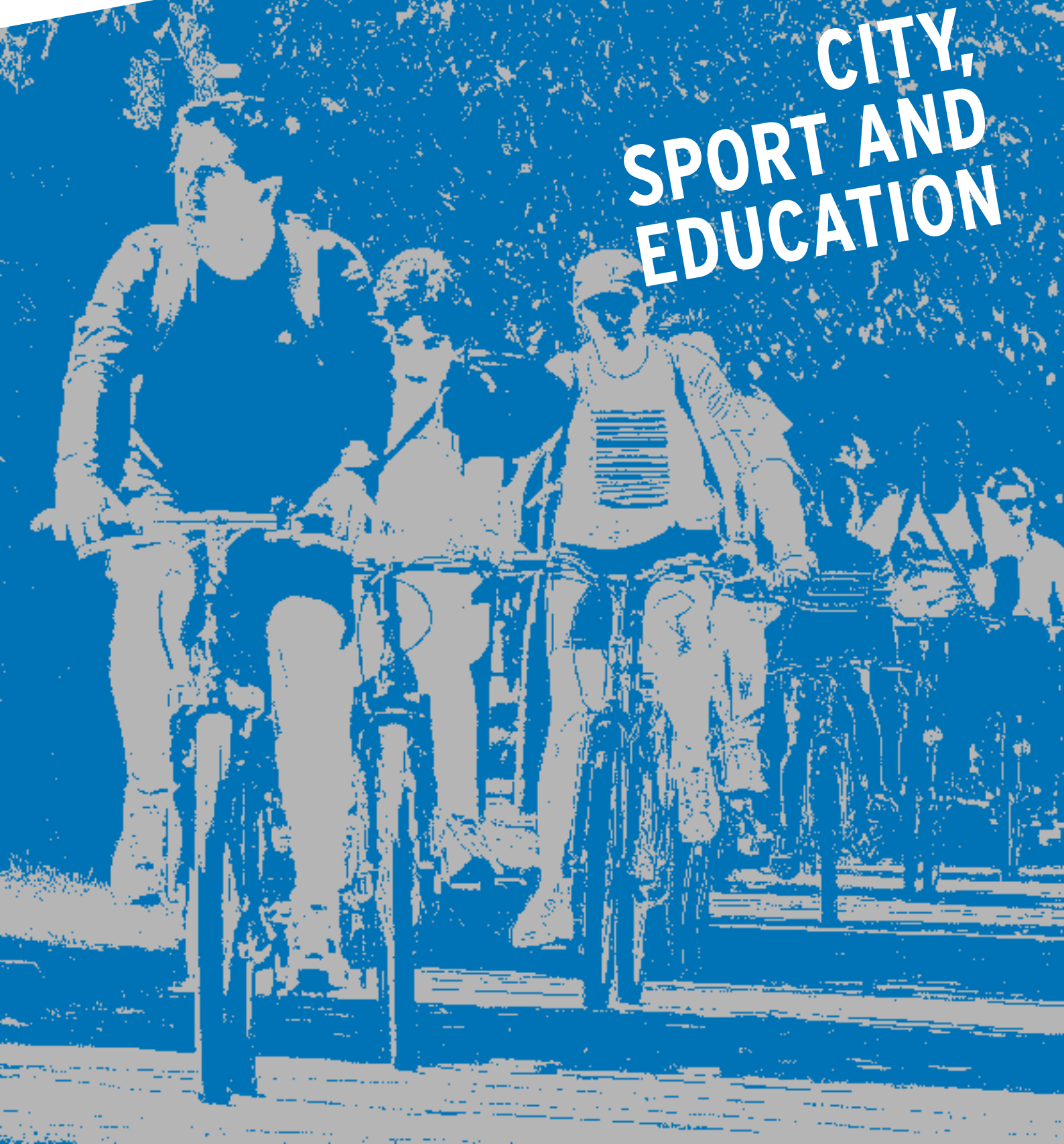


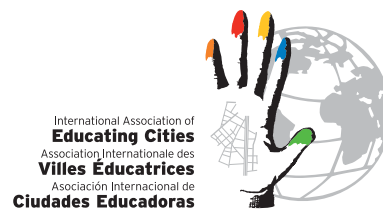
# MONOGRAPH

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATING CITIES  
2010

## CITY, SPORT AND EDUCATION



# CITY, SPORT AND EDUCATION



# Contents

---

**4 Editorial**

Enric Truñó

**Sergio  
Chiamparino**



**6**

**Steven N.  
Blair**



**10**

**Christina  
Ramberg**



**14**

**Johann  
Olav Koss**



**18**

**24 The Social Role of Sport. Implications on Local Sports Policy**

Paul De Knop and Marc Theeboom

**30 Sport and Gender Equality. Girls in Focus**

Gertrud Pfister

**40 Sport and Accessibility for All. Something all cities need**

Enrique Rovira-Beleta Cuyás

**47 Get Moving and Get in Shape, experience of the Campaign in Mexico City**

Sonia Aguirre Garcés, José Luis Navarro Paredes and Mónica Hurtado González, City of Mexico

**50 The Granollers Cup, handball that makes a city**

Josep Maria Junqueras Pujadas, City of Granollers

**53 Adji and vè: Two games that teach for life**

Dakpè Sossou, City of Lokossa

**55 The General State of Sports**

Nicole Dreyer and Serge Oehler, City of Strasbourg

**57 Montevideo, a Healthy City**

Gonzalo Halty, City of Montevideo

**60 Sport Inspires Me**

Pedro Peres, City of Lisbon

# Editorial

On the occasion of the 11th International Congress of Educating Cities to be held in Guadalajara (Mexico) with the theme "*Sport, Public Policy and Citizenship. Challenges for an Educating City*", the IAEC has considered it appropriate to prepare this Monograph on **City, Sport and Education**.

The Charter of Educating Cities affirms the right to experience the educating city, which is to be understood as an effective extension of the fundamental right to education. The city has countless opportunities for education using its resources, facilitating through its civic dynamics the incorporation of people of all ages into life-long learning.

Cities have to establish a broad-based, transversal and innovative educational policy, and have to include in it all types of formal, non-formal and informal education and the various cultural manifestations, sources of information and paths to discovery produced in the city, creating the framework for people's broad education and development.

The Charter expresses the commitment of the signatory cities to all the values and principles set out in it. It defines itself as open to revision and should be extended to encompass the aspects made necessary by rapid social evolution. On this occasion, it seems advisable and appropriate to study in greater depth the notion of physical activity, playing and sport as educational instruments. This is what both the Congress to be held in Guadalajara and this Monograph consider.

There is widespread theoretical agreement on a worldwide scale about the role of sport, in a wide sense. Thus, at the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly held in 2008, a resolution was passed that encouraged the use of sport as an instrument for the promotion of education, health, development and peace. The Millennium Goals to eradicate poverty highlight this role of sport.

In this context, this monograph presents a number of interviews dealing with various aspects and values of sporting practice ranging from health to the legacy that the organization of the Olympic Games generates for a city.

The Mayor of Turin, Sergio Chiamparino, reflects on the impact and legacy that the 2006 Winter Olympic Games have left for his city, showing that the meaning of the concept "Educating City" was present in the organization and holding of the Games. He also reminds us that, parallel with organizing the event, the city invested in new infrastructures and programmes with

the aim of providing support to sport for people of all ages, and promoting both sport's awareness and the values it entails.

Dr. Steven N. Blair, a specialist in sports medicine and physical activity from South Carolina, examines in depth the relationship between sport, physical activity and health. He thinks a change in lifestyle in the future is essential to alter behaviour and attitudes that will improve the health of inhabitants of the city, adapting the city to the needs of walkers and cyclists and discouraging the use of cars, and through actions to provide guidelines on healthy eating and to promote exercise.

Christina Ramberg, Environmental Planning Manager of the City of Gothenburg, reminds us of the importance of applying sustainable principles in the organization of sport events: the need to make organizers aware of the use of low-emission transport both for athletes and spectators, the use of renewable energy sources in the sports facilities, the need to reduce the production of waste and to have containers for sorting it and its later recycling. Her view is that an environmental plan related to the process of organizing major and minor events should be in place.

In turn, the Olympic medallist and President of the NGO Right To Play, Johann Koss, points out different criteria to be taken into account so that local sports policies for co-operation can be a vehicle for peace, presenting different experiences in places where there are conflicts.

This monograph also presents three contributions which introduce different aspects of sporting activity with the aim of making it more inclusive:

- The social role of sport, by Paul De Knop and Marc Theeboom.
- Sport and gender equality, by Gertrud Pfister.
- Sport and accessibility for all, by Enrique Rovira-Beleta.

All authors agree on the need for the democratization of access to the different benefits offered by exercise and sport, linking it to a project for a more participative and caring society. In particular, Paul De Knop and Marc Theeboom, from Flanders, point out that sport can be a means of improving the participation and integration of socially vulnerable groups and of reducing delinquency among young people at risk. They present the experience of 'neighbourhood sports' in Flanders.

Gertrud Pfister, from Copenhagen, reminds us of the differences in participation in sporting activity according

to gender as, in general, girls and women are more sedentary than boys and men, and within the female population there are major differences depending on their circumstances, including social class, ethnic origin, religion, culture, and the place they live, which generates different opportunities for access to sport.

Enrique Rovira-Beleta, from his watchtower in Barcelona, presents the proposal of encouraging sports centres in cities and in the rural environment, as centres of sociocultural and sports animation, guaranteeing access to people with different types of disabilities, fostering social interrelations and extending their function to that of being a place where people of all ages meet and where family life is conciliated.

Finally, six experiences are presented with the common denominator of being specific proposals rooted in several cities and which generate dynamics of participation in games and sports with the aim of promoting community participation, health and social cohesion.

The cities of Mexico D.F.: *Get moving and get in shape*; Granollers (Spain): *The Granollers Cup, handball that makes a city*; Lokossa (Benin): *Adjí and Vê, two games that teach for life*; Strasburg (France): *The General State of Sport*; Montevideo (Uruguay): *Montevideo, a Healthy City*, and Lisbon (Portugal): *Sport inspires me* present their criteria, motivations and realities. Notable among these is the execution of actions with the community and with the involvement of volunteers.

I would also like to draw attention to certain elements that are common to all the contributions and which coincide with my own views.

- There is a conviction that sport has become a social and cultural phenomenon of the utmost importance for inhabitants of all ages, especially due to the education values it conveys. We also know that, on some occasions, incorrect use is made of it when there is cheating in competitions in order to win at any price or when episodes of violence between athletes or their entourage or among spectators arise.
- The term sport is used in a very wide sense, sometimes with slight conceptual differences that vary between Europe and North America, but we have wished to include all kind of physical activities, games and sporting disciplines with the aim of promoting sport for all.
- Sport, physical activities and games are present in all

cultures, in all countries and in all social classes with a great diversity of manifestations and opportunities.

- The social impact of sport can be seen in the marvellous opportunities to generate ways for social relations, inclusion and cohesion, for fostering peace, and for promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Promoting sport that respects the environment is important. In accordance with the 11th principle of the Charter of Educating Cities: "The city must guarantee the quality of life for all its inhabitants. This requires creating a balance with its natural surroundings, providing the right to a healthy environment, as well as the right to leisure, amongst others."
- The willingness of local public authorities to define collectively the city's sports policy.
- The key role of educators, teachers, trainers, officials, monitors and parents must be highlighted. Parents have a decisive influence on the interest of children and young people in taking part in sports.
- City Councils, with their responsibility for the urban environment and public spaces, must act as facilitators and promoters of their use for healthy, sporting and educational purposes. The creation and maintenance of these spaces will be just as important as their correct management for a recreational and educational use, in line with the 8th principle of the Charter: "The organization of the city's physical urban space shall meet the requirements of accessibility, encounter, relations, play and leisure as well as a greater closeness to nature".

In the context of this monograph, it can be seen that the concepts of Educating City, Healthy City and Sporting City are, at heart, three closely related expressions, each with its own dynamics, but which interrelate and have to work in a co-ordinated manner with the same goal of making possible that cities be places where people can develop with autonomy, in a community, with healthy lifestyles, enjoying life-long learning, with social justice and territorial balance.

### Enric Truñó i Lagares

Sports Consultant

Councillor of the City of Barcelona (1979-98)





# Sergio Chiamparino

Mayor of Turin (Italy)

## INTERVIEW

**Sergio Chiamparino graduated in Political Science in 1973 and worked from 1970 to 1975 as a researcher at the University of Turin. In 1975 he began his political career as party leader for the Italian Communist Party (PCI) on the Moncalieri town council (Province of Turin). From 1982 to 1986 he was head of the economics department of the Turin PCI, from 1986 to 1988 economics consultant to the PCI group at the European Parliament, from 1989 to 1991 he was regional secretary of the *Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro* trade union (CGIL), from 1991 to 1995 provincial secretary of the *Partito Democratico della Sinistra* (PDS - Democratic Party of the Left) and, in 1993, was elected Turin city councillor. In 1996 he was elected as a PDS member of the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament, where he was a member of the permanent Budget Commission. He was elected Mayor of the City of Turin on 27 May 2001 and re-elected in 2006. From 2009 Chiamparino is President of ANCI (*Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani*).**

**What were the reasons that lead Turin to propose its candidacy to organize the Olympic Winter Games?**

The city was experiencing a period marked by the formulation of new development programmes aimed at overcoming the post-industrial crisis and at achieving better international positioning.

A need clearly arose when the industrial and post-industrial crisis began, in a one-company town like Turin, which would have had very serious effects, and it was necessary to find an alternative solution in order to avoid the collapse of the whole system. At that time, the goal was to give to Turin a new identity by linking its name not only to large industrial production -which was anyway very important for the city- but to new different features as well.

The promotion of the image of a city that was facing a stiff process of urban renewal and the presentation of new features became strategic objectives shared by the local ruling class.

Within this framework, the Games were immediately perceived as an occasion that could not be missed since they met the need to enhance infrastructure investment, sustainable development and the improvement of our architectural heritage.

Consequently, Turin would not only have been the perfect location to celebrate the Games, thanks to its geographic location and its traditional background of winter sports, but the city would also have been able to make the Olympics part its broader developments policies, linked to tourism, to the capacity to attract a new influx of convention tourists and to the development of reception and of cultural offerings.

**What criteria were applied in the organization of the Games once Turin won the nomination?**

First of all, we tried to organize ourselves into a cohesive territory and chosen a winning approach made up of a close collaboration between the organizations involved. That was a demanding, difficult process, but it was also the key to our success: the coordination between Toroc (Turin Organising Committee) and the local and the national actors was very efficient. It was actually based on the sharing of the final objective, in confirming the fact that the whole ruling class believed in a broad renewal of the city's identity and calling, looking for the possibility to set up this change in real terms. This was a fundamental factor, even if it outwardly looked as if it was a useful accessory element only. That was the common vision of a city which would have then been able to exploit the Games and their spin-offs.

Actually, if we look at the role played by major events over the two last decades for the promotion of cities -at least from the statistical point of view- it seems that a positive mutual relation should prevail between the organization of important events and the possibility of being successful in improving a city's urban quality and attractiveness.

There were essentially two criteria that guided the organization of the Games: the acceleration of a planned development strategy and new long-lasting investments. In fact, the city was undertaking a major infrastructural transformation and a significant cultural campaign, so we tried to direct the funds related to the event on more strategic projects already existing. Furthermore, the new buildings which were necessary for the Games were





conceived in order to be used after the event as housing, fair grounds, sport facilities, university residences and students housing, offices and so on.

#### **What was the role of citizens in the organizing process of the Games?**

Essential. Most of the 25,000 volunteers were from Turin. We asked our citizens to embrace the hosting of an international event and to enjoy the changes that the city was undertaking; the reaction was extraordinary. The citizens sealed the success of the Games by creating a genuine atmosphere of euphoria and satisfaction. Their participation was really significant: nearly all the Turinese have a personal story to tell that is strictly linked to the Olympics and it is almost always a very positive one. Our so-called civic pride was much improved by the Games and this is considered as one of the most important factors of the Olympic legacy.

#### **Do you consider that the meaning of the “Educating city” was present in the organization and celebration of the Games?**

The participation of citizens proves that. The Games were an event that was really part of our lives and I think that the meaning of “Educating city” was present in the organization and celebration of the Olympics. Moreover, beside the organization of the event, we invested in order to create new structures and programmes aimed at supporting sport for all ages and at promoting the values and awareness of sport. Furthermore, the knowledge of and the interest of citizens in winter sports and notably ice sport (not that common in Italy) have increased thanks to the Olympics.

Joining the International Association of Educating Cities

is based on the assumption that for any activity or event, the Administration must be committed to promoting citizen participation in the common project through institutions and other forms of civil society, along with spontaneous participation. I do think that this was part of the Olympic spirit. The citizens were seen as basic actors in the organization of the Games and we chose to depend on their hospitality and friendliness vis-à-vis international tourism. Our decision was successful and nowadays we are inspired by that model for the organization of the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy.

#### **What have the main legacies of the Olympic Games been, in your city and surroundings? Do you consider that the investments made in your city have been profitable, taking subsequent use into account? Could you also point out some intangible legacies?**

The legacy of the Games is varied. As I have already explained, there is a material legacy made up of new or renovated infrastructures. Moreover, all the Olympic buildings are now used for other purposes, from social housing to the expansion of the fair centre. The city's tourist accommodation capacity has reached European standards thanks to better structures and to a larger number of available beds. Moreover, tourism has considerably increased, becoming a real new economic sector. And then there's the intangible heritage, represented by the fact that the world now knows where Turin is and that the Turinese have rediscovered their interest in the city.

Let's cite another successful experience: Barcelona, after the Olympics of 1992, has reported an increase of tourist flows of 170% between 1990/1991 and 2005.



This is a textbook example that has been carefully studied, as Barcelona was not known as a tourist city and went through a real boom in tourism after the Olympic Games.

At that time in Barcelona a structured tourist policy plan did not exist, whereas its course of city development was quite clear; it was one of an urban situation with a powerful industrial fabric and, like all industrial areas, it was starting to face the effects of the transformation of a manufacturing-based society.

During that specific historical period Barcelona sensed it had to invest in the quality of the city as a tool for increasing its tourist appeal: Barcelona has the sea and its own history, and so it tried to collect all its resources and exploit the Olympics in that direction, by starting an extraordinary process of regeneration. This is an example that everybody has judged to be as successful.

**What is preferable in order to achieve a bigger impact on a city, promoting a major sport event from time to time or more frequent, less costly sports events?**

If by impact we mean investments and international visibility, the answer is no doubt a major event. Moreover, I would like to add that no other major event such as the Olympics can have the same powerful impact on a city, and a positive one if it is well managed, a negative one if something fails. This does not mean that it would be useless to set up a rich program of minor sports events, of course even this element is good for a city's image, for the quality of recreation and awareness of sport.

**In the progressive transformation of a city, would it be possible to transfer the spirit of institutional**

**collaboration that brings with it a major sports event to other areas of municipal action?**

It is not easy, but it is possible. I am thinking about large-scale urban projects, cultural initiatives and, above all, the management of public utilities on a metropolitan scale. The so-called governance must be a firm objective for the public administrators and it is the best tool for the stability and the efficacy of the development process. In comparison with the exceptional nature of the Games and with the challenges they represent, it is not possible to repeat the capacity to take important decisions quickly. In fact within ordinary contexts more time and dialogue are normally required.

**From your experience in the organization of the Olympic Winter Games, could you point out some learning experiences that you wish to share with other cities?**

The most important learning experience that we had, and that we acquired from other cities, such as Barcelona, was that it was necessary to work on the legacy from the very beginning. The task is to organise the Games in the best way possible, but the final goal is to gain lasting benefits for the city.

Furthermore, the Olympics acted as a deadline for other public works, such as the subway or pedestrian squares; they were an extraordinary opportunity to say "hurry up, let's finish this for the Olympics". Once you start respecting deadlines, you cannot do without them. Best practices generate an imitative effect. Today, Turin has changed for the better; its overall quality of life has improved; it now forms part of package holidays of international tour operators, and it is positioning as a city of excellence for knowledge and university study. And these changes are still ongoing. ●





# Steven N. Blair

Professor at the Departments of Exercise Science and Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Arnold School of Public Health, University of South Carolina (United States)

## INTERVIEW

**Dr. Blair is a Past-president of the National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity, American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), and American Academy of Kinesiology and Physical Education. He was the Senior Scientific Editor of the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health. He has received several honors including the 2003 ACSM Honor Award, the 2008 American Heart Association Population Science Research Prize, and is one of the few individuals outside the U.S. Public Health Service to receive the Surgeon General's Medallion. Dr. Blair is Co-Chair of the Exercise Is Medicine program. He has published over 450 chapters and papers dealing with his research on the association between lifestyle and health, with a main focus on exercise, fitness, body composition, and chronic disease. He is one of the most highly cited exercise scientists in the world. He has received honorary doctoral degrees from universities in the U.S., Belgium, and England. He has delivered lectures to medical, scientific, and lay groups in 48 states of the Union and 30 countries.**

**What level of physical activity is necessary in order for it to be beneficial to our health? Does any type of physical exercise qualify?**

Some activity is better than none, and more is better than less. A good general target is to accumulate 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity, such as walking, over the course of a week. A comparable alternative is to get 75 minutes of vigorous activity, such as running or vigorous sports, per week, according to official US government policy. These figures were released by the US Department of Health and Human Services as guidelines for physical activity a little over a year ago. The guidelines were developed by government scientists on the basis of the work a group of external scientists. It is a very extensive review of the literature, almost a 700-page report on the sciences that support the guidelines. There is a huge amount of evidence from both epidemiology and control studies that this dose of exercise produces physiological adaptation and provides health benefits.

The guideline also makes two additional points. One is that an individual can combine moderate and vigorous activity. For instance, three days of walks, 30 minutes each day, and one day of running for 30 minutes. The other major point is that our guidelines certify that doing more exercise can even have greater benefits for health.

**Do you think that a health checkup is necessary before doing sports?**

In the first place, it is necessary to clarify the term "sport". In Europe this term is used a little differently than in the US. By sports, we tend to mean doing something competitively, playing tennis, playing basketball, etc., while in Europe sport means a broader range of exercises:

going for a walk, going for a jog, playing tennis, etc.

But returning to your question, I think it is a very difficult and controversial one. Following along those lines would be the question as to what kind of health checkup is necessary. In the US it is not even really clear what kind of medical checkup should be done for people engaging in competitive sports, young, middle-aged or older. Nevertheless, some people believe that even young people doing sport, who are 18, 20 or 22 years of age, should get an ECG (electrocardiogram) stress test, but I do not agree with conducting such an extensive examination.

My own view is that if you are apparently in good health, if you have no known major chronic diseases and you decide you want to start walking a little more to improve your health and fitness, I do not think you have to go to the doctor in advance. Therefore, putting in more minutes of walking into your day does not require a medical checkup.

Nevertheless, in the case of an individual over 35 years of age, who has been walking regularly and decides to go into training to run a marathon, having a health checkup might be a good idea, even if there is no really consistent body of opinion on this.

On the other hand, it is clear that if you have a heart disease, hypertension or diabetes and you plan to increase your physical activity, you should probably talk to your doctor.

And one further point, if you are 50 years old and over and apparently healthy and you decide to start walking 150 minutes a week and you go out for a walk and feel chest pain or chest discomfort, that is not a good sign and you should contact your doctor immediately.

In short, there is no major convergence of opinion, but





San Sebastian (Spain)

the great majority of adults (90%) who intend to just start doing moderate intensity activities, such as walking, can go ahead and do so without a medical checkup.

#### **Currently, what are the main health problems generated by a lack of physical activity?**

Physical inactivity contributes to the most important health problems facing modern society. These include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, breast and colon cancer, obesity, and loss of function.

#### **Are there any major health illnesses that restrict individuals from doing sport?**

Years ago when we began with exercise recommendations we had a long list of such diseases. We would say that if you had congested heart failure you should not exercise, but now 25-30 years later, we have found that people with congested heart failure can also benefit from being physically active. I think almost everyone can benefit from being regularly active. If you have a serious disease, heart disease, cancer, etc. the exercise recommendations may need to be a little different, and you should follow your doctor's advice, but there is hardly any condition that absolutely prevents someone from exercising.

In reference to obesity, but indeed in other health conditions such as heart disease, breast cancer, diabetes, etc., taking exercise does not put a stop to these conditions, but if you exercise regularly your overall health improves and your risk of dying is reduced. Therefore, exercise does not magically make all your health problems disappear, but it does make you healthier and makes you more likely to survive over the long term.

#### **What other forms of behaviour or lifestyles are necessary?**

It is of course important to make other healthful lifestyle choices. These include not smoking, managing stress, having a healthy diet, and getting adequate sleep.

#### **What are the advantages of group physical recreational activity?**

Group recreational activity is very appealing to many people. Others prefer to exercise alone. The important thing is for people to find something they enjoy and will

do. Whether or not there are additional benefits from group activity is still uncertain, but what we have found in our research, and other researchers have found as well, is the value of what we call social support. It is very helpful to people who are trying to change over to healthy habits by exercising or dieting or quitting smoking if their friends, their family, their co-workers, or others provide them support and encouragement. This makes it more likely that they will achieve these lifestyle changes.

A group setting may in fact help you to exercise. When you go for a walk by yourself or for a walk with your neighbor the health benefits are probably the same but you may be more likely to go if you have do it with others. Group sports can be very attractive to many people.

#### **What are the best facilities for doing sport/physical activity? In the case of cities that do not have sufficient sport facilities, should this be an impediment to doing physical exercise?**

The best facilities will of course differ depending on the sport/activity of preference, cultural factors, and so on. I think one of the most important things that cities can do is to ensure that it is convenient for you to walk or cycle, and that people have access to recreational facilities. More people are likely benefit from these approaches than if a lot of money is invested in competitive sports facilities. I encourage local officials and public servants to make sport opportunities available to individuals and to make their communities convenient for walkers and cyclists.

#### **What is more beneficial for health: in-door activities (in a fitness center, for instance) or open-air activities?**

The Scandinavians have discovered that many times people get depressed during their long dark winters. There are special lights that help prevent this condition and sunlight seems to be effective in treating certain psychological conditions. Therefore, some people may get additional benefits from exercising outside, but I would like underscore the fact that the main thing is exercising, anywhere.

#### **Can sport bring in psychological benefits?**

I pointed out earlier what the physical health benefits





Barcelona (Spain)



Guadalajara (Mexico)



Loures (Portugal)

are, but it is clear that there are mental health benefits as well from exercising. We have solid research providing evidence that exercise is as effective as drugs in mitigating depression. It should often be a supplement to psychological counseling in treating depression. There are clear psychological benefits: people feel better, they report having more energy. In addition, exercise seems to improve brain function, both in children and older adults. Consequently, there are enormous physiological and mental health benefits to regular exercise.

**In your opinion, what should cities and physical spaces be like in order to facilitate an active life and physical exercise? What suggestions would you make to local administrations in this sense?**

Elected officials and civil servants have a huge responsibility to make the city convenient for the citizens to have a healthy lifestyle. Local administrations need to be certain that their city is walkable, that traffic is not an impediment to walking or cycling, that parks and green spaces are plentiful, that sports and recreational facilities are readily available and that tax policies encourage walking/cycling and discourage driving a car and parking.

The same is true for a healthy diet. I think what should be done is to ensure that healthy food is available. In the US in the poor areas of many of our large cities, there are not really many opportunities for people to buy fresh fruit and vegetables. One of the things that has become popular here is what we call farmers' markets, where the local farmers bring in their produce and make it convenient for people to buy it.

There are a number of things that officials can do as well as, for instance, conduct educational and health intervention programs and make advice available for starting these programs in schools and community centers, and helping people learn how to adopt healthy behaviors (non-smoking, having a healthy diet, being physically active, etc.).

**How would you motivate citizens to do exercise?**

Making physical activity convenient in the community; offering programs to community residents is important. This could take the shape of programs on the radio, television, in the newspapers, giving people advice on how to start and maintain exercise programs. Or, exercise programs could be offered at community facilities.

I think it is very important to ensure that doctors and other healthcare workers really understand the importance of exercise to health. We have started an initiative with the American Medical Association and the American College of Sports Medicine, which is called "Exercise is Medicine". This program tries to help healthcare workers to be more consistent in talking with their patients about the benefits of exercise.

Regarding the educational system, every year we graduate millions of students from schools in the U.S. who do not really have an understanding of the importance of exercise for their health; and we can say the same about diet. I think we almost totally fail in educating our young people about healthy lifestyles and I think that this is the government's responsibility.

**According to your experiences around the world, are you familiar with any best practices at city level that you would like to share with us?**

I think the Dutch have a very good approach, and Amsterdam particularly. In Amsterdam you have streetcar lanes making it convenient to take public transport, and there is a bicycle lane, there is a place for walking and there is also a place for cars. In Damm square there is a bicycle parking lot with thousands of bikes; there are more bikes parked there than in many entire cities in the U.S. It is an example of how to make a city convenient for walking and cycling, with parks and green spaces. City planners, city officials need to take this seriously, and even in Amsterdam there is probably room for improvement. ●



# Christina Ramberg

Environmental Planning Manager of the  
City of Gothenburg (Sweden)



## INTERVIEW

**Christina Ramberg, M. Sc. Chemical Engineering, works as Environmental Planning Manager at Gothenburg's Department of the Environment. She was head of development of Gothenburg's environmental programme for the World Athletics Championship in 1995 and Gothenburg's environmental programme for the European Athletics Championship in 2006. Currently, she is mostly involved in international or EU-financed environmental development projects for "greening events", as well as in climate change, energy efficiency, training and education, etc.**

**How can we combine sport and sustainability when city officials plan sport activities? Is the environment taken into account?**

When I look back on the situation in Gothenburg in the middle of the 90's, the relationship between sport and environment was not so clear. In Gothenburg we started our discussions on the environment and sport around 1994 because in 1995 we hosted the World Athletics Championship and the Department of the Environment proposed that sustainability should play a major role in the championship. And we began our environmental consciousness-raising work. It took some time to convince the organization, but afterwards they accepted our proposals. Nowadays there is a much greater understanding of sport and environment or sustainability.

**How should the urban environment or the sport facilities be equipped in order to respect the environment?**

In both the open air and indoor spaces, as far as sport is concerned, it is important to have the necessary equipment so that people can be made easily aware of environmental activities. For instance, skips for waste re-cycling, e.g. sorting paper, plastic, metal, etc. Or at the stadium, for instance, you can have an environmental-friendly energy production such as solar cells and windmills for electricity, and use renewable fuels such as biogas for heating, etc.

Environmentally adapted building material can also be used. It is also important to have good, low-emission public transport, and also to conserve our green areas around the arena or in the neighborhood. And it is essential to inform the citizens and the visitors about environmental considerations so that they can follow the "rules".

**What kind of sport events require a major preventive care by the organizers?**

All major events require preventive care as they have a major environmental impact. A major sport event means that there are agglomerations of people and many public celebrations. Therefore you need special preventive care. But it is also necessary to begin environmental impact discussions even for rather small happenings, cultural or minor sport events, because even minor events have an environmental impact. Moreover, minor events give you the possibility to learn how to handle environmental issues.

**What environmental impacts can major sports events have?**

Major sports events such as the World Championship or the European Athletics Championship, or football and other sports events have an environmental impact, such as increased greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, noise problems, increased energy consumption and an increase in waste.







### What are the basic principles of sustainability to take into account at sport events?

Sustainable procurement criteria are important in the organization of an event. It is important that all the equipment you need for an event has a low environmental impact, we are talking about the impact on air quality or water, greenhouse gas emissions or noise.

It is also crucial that you provide information for the citizens and visitors to the arena, so that they know which environmental criteria are being met. Informing and training civil servants is also very important.

### What are the main benefits of organizing sustainable events? Do sustainable measures imply an economic burden for event organizers?

If an organization or a City Council hosts a major event, it is very important that you can show your environmental measures -that there is an environment policy, an environmental action plan and a follow-up program. This can give you the possibility of organizing other events in the future because you have complied with the environmental recommendations.

Nowadays organizers do not think that sustainable measures imply an economic burden because they also generate economic benefits, at least in the medium- and long-term. If we are talking about major organizers, they give them the possibility of competing for new events in the city; and a major international or even national event that includes environmental actions will generate economic benefits for the organizers. So I do not think that one can say today that the application of sustainable measures is an economic burden.

### Should local governments establish mandatory regulations to control sport events or is it more suitable to establish a guide for best environmental practices in order to foster awareness among all the people involved in the process?

My own opinion is that guidelines or handbooks on how to handle environmental issues are more important for

organizing an event than legislation and regulations. In Gothenburg, we have tried to work in a way that organizers voluntarily take sustainability into account and we give them advice and ideas on this matter. We also have a certification system that is less burdensome than ISO or EMAS certification; if the organizers meet certain sustainable demands they will receive an Environment Certificate for the event. We have worked with the organizers, and we have noticed that it is easier to get them on board if we encourage them in a positive way. This environmental certification allows them to show that they are certified by the our city's local environment administration. We already began this in 1995 and we have developed the system even further: we use it for other businesses as well, but we know that it is a very good solution for events. When we talk about major sporting events such as the Olympic Games, then ISO or EMAS certification is more suitable, but for other kinds of events a simpler system can be sufficient. Therefore, having guidelines and certification systems has been the best solution for us.

Of course we also comply with legislation and regulations -when the existing legislation is applicable. For instance, the handling of food at an event. When we talk about the certification system, the first point is that you must obey the law, and accordingly we recommend what is needed to be done to be certified. We have criteria for transport, energy production and consumption, chemical use, etc. We try to improve the work of the organizers on the sustainability side, by adding other requirements that should be met, going further than legislation does.

### Could you give us some examples of the things that are included in these guidelines?

The guidelines for events include:

- Transport, including the transport for the people coming to the event, but also for the athletes and players and transport for distribution. So we take into account all kinds of transport.

- Energy consumption and efficiency: how to handle energy issues in a more environment-friendly way, and, of course, greenhouse gas emission management.
  - Waste handling: provide the possibility for sorting waste.
  - Food handling: proper hygienic food handling, as per current legislation, but also recommendations for providing ecological food.
  - Disposable materials: paper or bio-degradable material.
  - Conservation of green areas.
  - Training and information: training civil servants for the event and providing information to citizens and visitors.
- These are just some examples. When it is a really major event, we have also discussed souvenirs and the use of chemicals.

**Who bears the responsibility for sustainability in sport at the city level (the Department of Sports, the Department of the Environment, others)? Is coordination among departments required?**

At this time in our city there is a discussion among different departments. From the beginning it was the Department of the Environment that suggested including environmental requirements in events of this type. But there is currently solid cooperation, not only between the Department of Sport and the Department of the Environment, but also among others. Major events, sports or other kinds of events attract many tourists, so cooperation is critical amongst different departments (tourism, sport, the environment, transport, or waste issues, etc). In Gothenburg, at least, when a major event is organized there is always a task force from different departments working together; at a minor event at the very least the Department of Sport and the Department of the Environment work together.

**What criteria should govern the relationship with sport and environmental associations?**

The most important thing is that you work together and discuss sustainability at a very early stage because it is not something that you can work out just two weeks before an event begins. One must begin working on this issue one or two years or more before the event opens. It is very important that you establish cooperation at least between the sport organizations in your city and the environment department. Furthermore, environmental associations can also get involved in this work.

**Which issues should awareness campaigns or training for event organizers include? And what about those for supporters?**



I am not sure if a campaign is necessary, but what is crucial is to make visible the fact that the events in our city are properly based on the principles of sustainability. It is also important to provide all this information to the media and the press that will follow the event.

It is fundamental to integrate the training of the civil servants into the event, as well as the training of volunteers or people working in the organizations that are handling the event. These training sessions should take into account all the criteria that I have mentioned earlier regarding waste sorting, transport, food handling, the use of chemicals, building materials, energy production and consumption, etc.

When we refer to the supporters, I recognize that training them can be very difficult. Nevertheless, you should provide them with information on the rules and regulations of the stadium or the arena, for instance, that you cannot throw your paper or your waste wherever you want, and that you need to follow the rules. So what is important is to give them information and show them where they can find all the skips for waste sorting and the like. Another idea that could help is to find a famous football player or an athletic star who will support the principles of sustainability. If you have a major event such as the European Championship in your city and one of your own national stars takes a stand on the importance of waste sorting or other sustainability issues, this can serve as a point of reference for the supporters. ●





# Johann Olav Koss

President and Chief Executive Officer of Right To Play  
Toronto (Canada)

## INTERVIEW

**Johann Olav Koss is the Founder of Right To Play -an international humanitarian organization that uses sport and play to improve health, develop life skills and foster peace among children in the most disadvantaged regions of the world. As one of the greatest speed skaters of all time, Johann earned 5 Olympic medals and broke 11 world records throughout the course of his career. Johann began his humanitarian work as an Ambassador for Olympic Aid in 1993. In 1994, he was chosen by UNICEF to be the Special Representative for Sport and, in 2006, was appointed to the post of Ambassador. Johann has dedicated himself to growing Right To Play into an internationally recognized non-government organization (NGO) and a leader in Sport for Development. Today, Right To Play develops and implements child and community development programs in more than 20 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, working with the UN and other agencies, including UNICEF, UNHCR, GAVI and WHO.**

**Johann's acclamations include Sportsman of the Year by USA Sports Illustrated, the Jesse Owens Award, the International Athletic Foundation Award and the Jackie Robinson Humanitarian Award. Johann was given the Child Survival Award in 1996 by the Carter Center in Atlanta and, later that year during the celebration of UNICEF's 50th anniversary, he was given UNICEF'S honorary award. He has been named a Future Leader of Tomorrow by TIME magazine, a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum and most recently a Senior Ashoka Fellow by the Ashoka Association.**

**Johann holds a Bachelor of Medicine from the University of Queensland and an Executive MBA from the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto.**

**What should the role be of local institutions in order to foster peace through sport? What functions can international associations such as "Right to Play" have?**

Local institutions are instrumental to ensuring the effective delivery of sport programs that aim to foster peace. Because they are based at the community level, local institutions are well-equipped to provide knowledge and expertise about community needs and are important allies when developing and implementing sport and play programs at the local level.

In war-affected communities international organizations can be very effective as they can maintain neutrality. In times of conflict, local institutions may be used as political instruments to manipulate power dynamics -a process that can contribute to distrust by some members of the community. In these contexts, it is often easier for international organizations like Right To Play to remain neutral, and as a result, to initiate interventions that aim to enhance peace and reconciliation. Although, local expertise is invaluable to all humanitarian interventions, international organizations also possess a wide range

of resources, know-how and expertise which can make them extremely valuable to local peace-building efforts. Although no two situations are alike, international organizations are often able to take lessons learned from one context and apply them to another with significant results.

Ideally, international organizations will work in tandem with local institutions to support shared objectives and goals. Doing so will enhance the overall strength and effectiveness of the intervention at hand, and in my opinion, will be more likely to effectively contribute to peace and reconciliation efforts over the long-term.

**On the practical level, what have been the impacts of the recommendations produced by the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group?**

The Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SPD IWG) is a high-level policy initiative that grew out of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development. When it began in 2004, there were only a handful of countries participating. By 2008, this participation had risen to include 59 governments,



Johann Koss joins Sport and Play activities in Uganda



Promoting teamwork and building trust and respect among participants



Right To Play programming in Peru

10 UN agencies, programmes and funds, and countless representatives from civil society.

As Secretariat to the SDP IWG from 2004-2008, Right To Play led efforts to achieve the working group's first mandate by developing and presenting policy recommendations to governments that outlined how sport could be positioned as a tool for development in national and international development strategies. In 2008, we released a ground-breaking report titled "Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Governments" at a meeting on the margins of the Summer Olympic Games. This report, which was the first of its kind, demonstrated that well-designed policies and programs focused on the best values of sport could drive development goals forward by presenting consolidated up-to-date evidence of the benefits of sport in a number of thematic areas, including: i) health promotion and disease prevention, ii) child and youth development and education, iii) gender empowerment, iv) inclusion, and v) peace-building. The report also presented specific policy and program-level recommendations to different government ministries working in these particular areas, as well as practical high-level recommendations that all countries could adopt.

The recommendations from the report have been very well received. In fact, it has been a challenge to keep up with all of the requests we have received to distribute them and we are now planning to translate the report into other languages. It pleases me to say that the report's recommendations have now been discussed at a number of important international meetings and events and they have been circulated amongst key influential bodies, including the Commonwealth, the European Commission, the African Union and the United Nations General Assembly. Perhaps most notably, at the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, a resolution was passed by Member States to encourage the use of sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace. Not only did this resolution explicitly acknowledge our recommendations,

but it also took the further step of encouraging Member States to implement them.

Although policy change takes time, we have seen some governments increase their budget allocations towards Sport for Development and Peace programming in the past few years. We have also witnessed the incorporation of sport and physical activity into educational curriculum, and in some instances, in national poverty reduction strategies. As a result of the recommendations, there has also been increased government recognition of the ways in which sport can contribute to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

With the new mandate for the SDP IWG now being transitioned to the UN, there is enormous potential to support the uptake of the policy recommendations by Member States. Recognizing that some governments will need assistance to do this, the task at hand will be to facilitate the transfer of technical expertise, as well as the financial and logistical resources, that are needed to support implementation efforts. We look forward to being closely involved in this process and would like to begin by identifying early adopter governments so that we can create case-studies highlighting their success.

#### **What are the best ways or forms to use sports to promote peace? What values can be transmitted through sport?**

From my personal experiences visiting communities that have been affected by war and conflict, and now through my work with Right To Play, I have learned a lot about the social value of sport and how it can contribute to peace. When used effectively, I believe that sport can promote peace in a number of ways.

Given its universal appeal and popularity, sport programs can be an excellent way to stimulate relationships between people on a very personal level. Sport programs do this by providing the initial "hook" needed to bring opposing groups together. In doing so, sport can help to build relationships between opposing groups and provide them





Thailand's Umpium Camp



Rwanda, Day of the African Child

with a sense of shared identity over time.

Sport can also help to support disarmament and demobilization efforts in post-conflict settings and can help to reintegrate former combatants into their communities. Sport programs work by creating shared experiences between excluded individuals and their communities and by providing marginalized people with a sense of belonging and purpose that can deter them from becoming involved in armed gangs and militias. Regular sporting activities can also help to return a sense of normalcy to communities that are coping with the after-effects of war and can provide safe spaces where psycho-social trauma can be acknowledged and discussed.

Even in settings where active conflict has not occurred, sport programs are instrumental to the psycho-social health and well-being of communities, and can work to ensure that conflict does not escalate into violence. Effective sport programs that are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all members of the community can enhance quality of life and promote social cohesion. In doing so, sport can unite people across social, economic and cultural divides, and over time, this can help to minimize perceived differences.

For children and youth in particular, sport and play programs are extremely advantageous. By participating in sporting activities that are well-designed and delivered by qualified and well-trained coaches and leaders, children and youth can gain the transferable life skills needed to navigate key life transitions successfully. Through sport participation, children and youth gain valuable leadership, communications and team-building skills, and come to understand how to resolve conflicts non-violently. Through regular contact with a caring adult role model, they also gain self-confidence and become more self-aware as individuals - thus putting them on a positive life trajectory which can complement long-term peace-building efforts

**Can any sport contribute to fostering peace? What does the effectiveness of these actions depend on?**

At Right To Play, we specially design our sport and play programs with specific development and peace outcomes in mind. When programs are designed to promote specific outcomes, I believe they are more likely to achieve their desired goals. This does not mean, however, that other approaches cannot also promote peace. When designed and delivered effectively, I believe that many different types of sport programs contribute to positive social change. Having said this, there are certain characteristics of well-designed sport programs that must be prioritized.

First and foremost, sport programs that seek to promote peace must prioritize the best values of sport. These values include characteristics such as fair play, teamwork, inclusion, respect for one's opponents and cooperation. Sport programs that focus on these values, over and above a focus on competition and winning at all costs, will be much more likely to achieve their desired outcomes.

Secondly, sport and play programs must be delivered by well-trained coaches and leaders who are poised to act as positive role models for participants. Many young people, particularly during adolescence, become discouraged from participating in regular sport and play programs if they do not receive ongoing support from caring adult role models and peers. Coaches and leaders should be sensitive to this and must strive to create positive environments conducive to learning and development.

Finally, programs must be offered in safe spaces that are accessible and inclusive to all. Programs should be adapted to include persons with disabilities - and in the case of post-conflict settings, persons recovering from war-related injury and trauma. Programs must also be delivered in accessible settings that consider the unique culture and circumstance of the community.

**Can you explain the impact of any successful experiences that you know of in this area?**

Right To Play began implementing sport and play activities in refugee settings nearly 10 years ago as a means to reach out to children and youth affected by war. Today, we are



Children with and without disabilities gain confidence and improve their health by participating in inclusive sport programs

actively working with refugees and internally displaced persons in twelve countries. Results from evaluations conducted on our programming in at-risk countries such as Azerbaijan, Benin, Mali, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and the West Bank have demonstrated that our approach to peace-building is contributing to conflict reduction at the community level while increasing individual abilities to resolve conflict cooperatively.

At the same time, we are also actively promoting advocacy efforts to support global peace. For example, in Lebanon at the Global Peace Games in 2008, we worked in partnership with local and national organizations to bring more than 550 child refugees from Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq together to sign the UNESCO Manifesto for “Peace and Non-Violence in Education”. By signing the Manifesto in the presence of local authorities, children pledged their commitment to non discrimination and respect, while renouncing all forms of violence and defending freedom of expression, open participation and more.

Because we believe that peace-building interventions require the involvement of entire communities, we work to engage parents, gatekeepers, community leaders and governments in all of our programs and initiatives. We proudly work alongside local and national partners, including national Ministries of Education, municipal

authorities, as well as local and international branches of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Recently, an evaluation of a UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) program in Palestine found that schools that were implementing our curriculum incurred fewer incidents of violence amongst their students.

#### **Is sport intervention in violent areas or war zones feasible?**

Any intervention in a war-affected region will bring great challenges, and certainly sport and play interventions are no exception. In active war zones, sport can act as a powerful agent to provide respite from conflict and to briefly open a window for temporary aid and relief efforts to take place. An excellent example of this is the Olympic Truce passed by the United Nations each Olympic year. Historically, the Olympic Truce was designed to ensure the safe passage of athletes from warring nations to and from the Games. More recently, the Truce has become symbolic of sport’s power as an agent of peace. During the 1994 Lillehammer Olympic Games, for example, the Truce prompted a halt to the conflict in Bosnia just long enough to permit the inoculation of 10,000 Bosnian children. Similarly, in Sudan, the Truce prompted a ceasefire between





Sport and Play activities offer opportunities to work together towards a common goal

Sudanese government and an armed opposition group. These examples, although inspiring, are not commonplace. We must not forget that sport alone cannot solve years of conflict or end wars between nations. While these examples present compelling evidence of the potential for sport to act as a catalyst to promote peace, it is important to note that in most active war zones, sport-specific interventions are not typically feasible.

Where war is actively occurring, the reality is that emergency response efforts often must be prioritized over and above sport. In countries affected by war, children, adults and entire communities face enormous risks to their safety, security and well-being. In most of these circumstances the most fundamental prerequisites for the delivery of effective sport programs (i.e. safe spaces to gather, basic nutrition, physical infrastructure, etc.) are not present, and thus it is not advisable to introduce a sporting intervention without first conducting a thorough assessment of the on-the-ground reality of the situation.

Where active violence has ceased, sporting interventions are excellent ways to support peace-building efforts by enhancing the process of disarmament, reconciliation and the promotion of healing. Sport is particularly effective in integrating victims of war, including former child-soldiers,

into their communities, and contributing to a sense of resiliency and self-confidence amongst those who have been directly affected by violence.

#### Do you know of any cases of rejection of cooperative sport activities offered to some cities in special situations?

I am not aware of any cases where cooperative sport activities have been rejected by the community, however, this is not to say that it has not happened. My advice in this area is to ensure that sport interventions are well-designed from the outset and that a proper analysis and evaluation is conducted prior to embarking on a new program. Programs should be designed in collaboration with local implementing partners and experts in order to ensure they meet the needs expressed by the community, and are designed with sensitivity to local culture. Programs that fail to do this may risk being rejected by the city or community in question.

#### What features should be contemplated necessarily in order to establish policies of cooperation for peace through sport?


While policy change is crucial to support peace-building efforts, policy change alone will never be effective without strong support for peace-building processes at the programmatic and civic levels.

As a starting point, governments, as members of the UN General Assembly, can call on and encourage armed opposition groups involved in conflict to respect the Olympic Truce. Doing so can provide warring parties with a window of opportunity to consider non-violent solutions.

Governments can also explicitly reference sport as an agent of peace-building directly in any national policy related to peace-building. Doing so will help to raise awareness of sport's potential and facilitate consideration for sport in broader international strategies for peace.

Countries should also re-consider their use of sport for nation-building in order to ensure that the messages being supported are not promoting negative feelings towards opposing groups or towards outsiders.

Finally, countries must commit to addressing peace-building at the individual level, as well as at the socio-political level. Efforts that seek to address only one of these levels risk having no discernible impact on lasting peace. Programs that build trust and relationships at the individual level can have a transformative impact on community attitudes and perceptions. To capitalize on these benefits, governments are encouraged to work directly with local institutions and expert implementing organization in order to enhance and support uptake at the socio-political level. ●



# The Social Role of Sport. Implications on Local Sports Policy

**Paul De Knop and Marc Theeboom**

Department of Sport Policy and Management, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium)

**The belief in a broader social role of sport has resulted in a shift among many local sports policy makers to regard sport from a general welfare perspective. As the organized sports sector only plays a moderate role in a more inclusive policy, alternatively organized sports initiatives (such as 'neighbourhood sports' in Flanders) are offering new opportunities to reach out to specific socially deprived groups in society.**

### Introduction

The practice of sport has been associated with a variety of social meanings and functions (Hoyng et al., 1998). These functions are situated either on the individual or on the social level and relate, among other things, to health improvement, democratization, identification, economic and political values. For example, over the past decade, many have stated that sport can contribute to the development of social capital, which will eventually help people in becoming better citizens. Research has suggested that sports involvement is negatively correlated with antisocial attitudes, such as ethnocentrism, individualism, political distrust, traditionalism and feelings of insecurity (Scheerder et al., 2006). It has also been indicated that people involved in sports have more trust in others compared to non-active people (Breedveld & van der Meulen, 2002) and that sports participation enhances civic engagement in comparison with other leisure activities (Uslaner, 1999).

Many have indicated that organized sports participation in particular can play an important role in this. For example, membership in sports associations is believed to encourage group cohesion (Elchardus et al., 2001) and according to Putnam (2000), sports organizations can even contribute to the (re)construction of social cohesion in today's individualized societies.

Consequently, since the '90s, an increased trust in the broad social role of sport can be seen in many countries. Awareness campaigns have been set up on different levels to emphasize the social value of sport and to stimulate various actors within the sports sector to play a more active role in this. For example, 2004 was chosen as the 'European Year of Education through Sport' by the European Commission, and the United Nations proclaimed 2005 as the 'International Year of Sport and Physical Education'. During the latter, the sports sector was called upon to help to work for world peace and to support the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2005). For example, in this context, an increasing number of 'sport development projects' have been set up in developing

countries to provide additional opportunities for youth education and community building, as well as to support the battle against HIV/Aids (Kruse, 2006).

This belief in the broader social role of sport has resulted in a shift in aims among an increasing number of local sports policy makers in which the promotion of sport moved from a narrow (physical) health promotion perspective to a wider social welfare perspective (De Graaff, 1996). Instead of regarding sports merely as a way to make people more physically active, it gradually also became a means to improve the situation of specific groups in society (such as, with regard to the improvement of social integration and participation of socially vulnerable groups, the reduction of delinquency and criminality among youth at risk, etc...) (Collins & Kay, 2003).

### Sport-plus

While it can be noted that the educational potential of sport has been known for a long time (e.g., in the context of physical education and organized youth sport), the use of sport as a means of the personal and social development of specific deprived groups in society is of a more recent date. Two approaches can be distinguished here: that is, 'sport-plus' and 'plus-sport'. In the first approach, the emphasis is on sport as such, but its instrumental role is also considered. The second approach starts from a social, educational or health-related perspective and regards sport merely as a part of a broader and more complex set of processes. In the remainder of this paper, the focus will be on sport-plus.

Today, various examples of specific local sport-plus initiatives can be found in cities from around the world. One of the specific groups that are often being targeted through sport is the group of socially deprived youth. Targeting this group has often been triggered by the growing concern among local policy makers regarding the public 'nuisance' specific youth causes in urban deprived areas (e.g., vandalism, offensive behaviour,...). Making use of sport in dealing with this youth segment mostly emphasizes the prevention of 'undesirable' behaviour. It

has been assumed that sport for them can, among other things, contribute to a better self-image, better life skills, a higher personal and social sense of responsibility, more social capital, etc. The underlying notion is that sporting outcomes (e.g., skill development) might eventually lead to intermediate changes on the individual level (e.g., pro-social development), which in turn might lead to broader societal changes (e.g., social cohesion).

Initiatives for this group are often characterized by their high accessibility, the use of challenging or trendy sports activities, the involvement of various partners and alternative organizational formats. The latter is a result of the fact that, despite the often acclaimed benefits of organized sports involvement, sports clubs have never played a significant role in the provision of sports opportunities for underprivileged youth. Instead, somewhat surprisingly, other providers have become gradually involved in the organization of specific community sports initiatives (e.g., the sector of youth, education, integration, social affairs, prevention,...).

To illustrate the shift in local sports policy to make use of sport from a more general welfare perspective, a specific trend is described below that has been noted since the beginning of the 90's in most cities in Flanders, the northern Dutch-speaking part of Belgium.

### Neighbourhood Sport in Flanders

Since the 1960's, Flemish government has actively promoted sports participation among its population (De Knop, 2000). Undoubtedly, partly because of an active 'Sports for all' policy, today the Flemish population is more sports active than before. However, studies indicate that clear differences in sports activity levels exist between various groups (e.g., Scheerder, 2004). Statistics show that the degree of sports participation of specific groups, such as senior citizens, disabled persons and ethnic minorities, is distinctly lower than for other groups. A number of barriers exist that can account for these differences in sports participation. These relate to a variation in personal attitudes and knowledge of sport and physical activity, but also to differences in availability of time, means, mobility, etc.

Generally speaking, two categories of groups can be distinguished that are not, or only to a limited extent, involved in sport. These two categories can be characterized in relation to a) their (problematic) degree of sports participation (e.g., 'sports inactive' and 'sports underprivileged') and b) their (problematic) situation (e.g., social deprivation, ethnic minorities, juvenile delinquents, drug addicts,...). Over the years, several initiatives have been set up in Flanders to reach out to these categories. The aims differ according to the specific category. With regard to the first category, the emphasis is on increasing the interest in sport (e.g., through raising the quality of

the offer, an increased demand-orientation, improving communication and accessibility of the offer). Although these strategies are also used in reaching out to persons in the second category, there has been a tendency to focus on a more instrumental function of sport, in which sports participation is regarded as a means to increase personal and social development among socially deprived target groups. This has led to the occurrence of an alternative





sports organizational format in the larger Flemish cities that became known as 'neighbourhood sports', a term that refers in essence to the use of specific methodologies that are different from the more traditional sports delivery formats.

It is important to note that one overall neighbourhood sports format does not exist in the Flemish context. Findings of a study that attempted to determine the actual

position of neighbourhood sports in Flanders indicated that there is a wide diversity of organizational formats in neighbourhood sports (Theeboom & De Maesschalck, 2006). This variety largely depends on the type of co-ordinating organization, as well as on the aims and specific target group. Neighbourhood sports are often regarded as an accessible means of sports stimulation and are addressed to those groups that are not, or only







to a limited extent, participating in (organized) sports. While neighbourhood sports initiatives occasionally make use of regular sports facilities, they are often organized in a variety of facilities (from outdoor places such as public parks and squares to indoor facilities such as renovated warehouses, parking spaces, etc.). In most of these initiatives there has been an increased interest in working together on the local level with other structures coming from in and outside the sports sector. The choice of neighbourhood sports activities, as well as the organizational level and type of guidance approach, varies according to the target group and specific neighbourhood characteristics.

Today, the Flemish government recognizes the value of neighbourhood sports. A decree on 'Local sport policy', which was issued in 2008, states that municipal sports services are obliged to invest one fifth of the government funds in alternatively organized sports initiatives (such as neighbourhood sports) in order to receive subsidies from the Flemish government. Next to school sports, neighbourhood sports has become one of the most frequent alternative formats for organized sports in Flemish cities and are in line with what has been described as being the characteristics of community sports

development: a flexible, adaptable, informal, interactive, people-centred approach, aimed at lowering the initial hurdles to participation in order to address the deficiencies of mainstream provision (Hylton & Totten, 2008). The innovative character of these neighbourhood sports initiatives for the Flemish situation can be found in the way they are embedded in regular structures (municipal sports and youth services) and the striving towards a formal co-operation network of different actors within the community context. The concept of neighbourhood sports can be compared with formats elsewhere, such as the Community Sport Networks in the UK and the Neighbourhood-Education-Sport ('BOS') approach in the Netherlands.

### Concluding remarks

It becomes clear that the expectations for using sport from a broader social perspective have increased over the past decade, which has stimulated an increasing number of local policy makers to make use of sport as an important mediator in helping socially deprived groups. However, despite the growing belief among many regarding this potential of sport-plus, the often acclaimed added value of sport is described in most cases in only very general and vague terms. Determining whether or not these vague aims

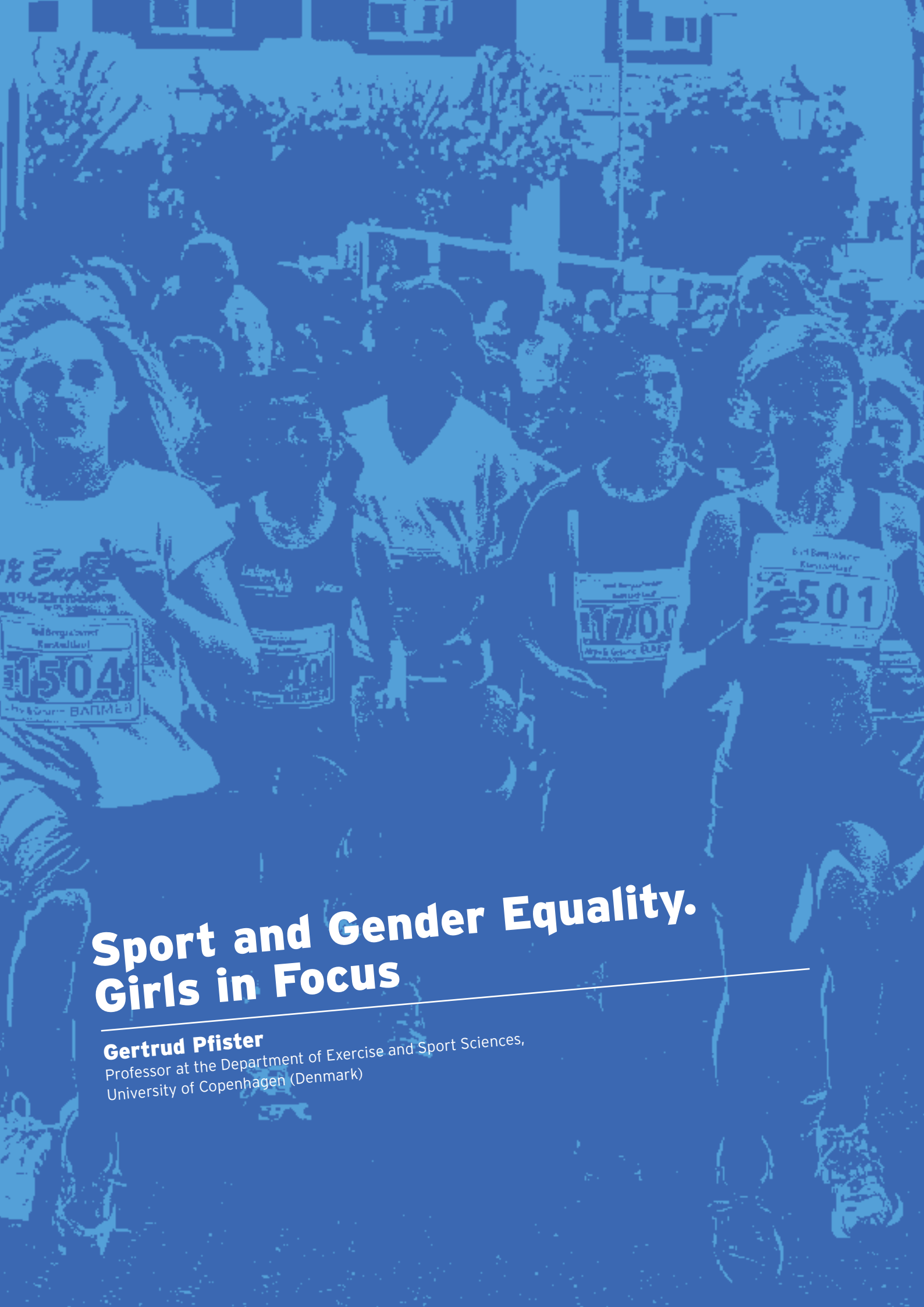
can be realized is, therefore, very difficult. Coalter (2007) referred in this context to "... ill-defined interventions with hard-to-follow outcomes..." (p.31). There is also a growing awareness that measuring the outcomes of sport-plus interventions is very difficult (Patriksson, 1995). Specific (often in time and means restricted) programs are in many cases expected to provide a solution for broad social problems (Weiss, 1993). And as sport is merely an intermediate means of intervention, it becomes even more difficult to determine its impact. Consequently, there is a need for a clear conceptual framework regarding the intermediate mechanisms that may underlie good sport-plus initiatives.

It has also become clear that the organized sports sector, with its much acclaimed benefits for those involved, only plays a moderate role in a sport-plus policy aimed at specific socially deprived groups in society. Some researchers strongly argue that sports clubs might be the source of generating or at least amplifying mechanisms of inclusion as well as exclusion, and that processes of bonding and bridging do not necessarily, nor automatically happen within the structures of a traditional sports club (Bailey, 2007; Elling, 2002). It can be expected that services situated 'outside' of their core business (e.g., attracting and working with socially deprived youth), are not given any priority and, most likely, will not be provided in an optimal way. This is in line with Coalter (2007), who stated that attempts to use the organized sports sector to achieve wider policy goals, can undermine their essential (mostly non-altruistic) purpose, qualities and stability.

The unsettled position of the organized sports sector to play a bigger role in a more inclusive sports policy has therefore paved the way to other organizational formats (such as neighbourhood sport). It can be expected that this trend will have an impact on the future of local sports policies. ●

## References

- Bailey, R. (2007). *Youth Sport and Social Inclusion*. In N. Holt (ed.). *Positive Youth Development through Sport*. London: Routledge.
- Breedveld, K., & van der Meulen, R. (2003). *Vertrouwen in de Sport. Een Empirische Analyse van de Relatie tussen Sportdeelname en Sociaal Kapitaal* [Trust in sport. An empirical analysis of the relationship between sports participation and social capital]. *Vrijtijdstudies* 20(2), 37-49.
- Coalter, F. (2007). *A wider social role for sport. Who's keeping the score?* London: Routledge.
- Collins, M. & Kay, T. (2003). *Sport and Social Exclusion*. London: Routledge.
- Danish, S.J., Nellen, V.C. (1997). *New roles for sport psychologists: Teaching life skills through sport to at-risk youth*. *Quest*, 49, 100-113.
- De Graaff, D. (1996). *Ontwikkelingen in het Gemeentelijk Sportbeleid in de Jaren Negentig: een Verkennde Studie in Drie Gemeenten* [Developments in local sports policies in the '90s: an exploratory study in three municipalities]. Doctoraal dissertation, Amsterdam: University.
- De Knop, P. (2000). *Veertig jaar sport- en vrijetijdsbeleid in Vlaanderen* [Forty years of sports and leisure policy in Flanders]. Brussel: VUB Press.
- De Knop, P. & Walgrave, L. (eds.) (1992). *Sport als integratie. Kansen voor maatschappelijk kwetsbare jongeren* [Sport as integration. Chances for socially deprived youth]. Brussel: Koning Boudewijnstichting.
- Elchardus, M., Huyse, L., & Hooghe, M. (2001). *Het maatschappelijk middenveld in Vlaanderen. Een onderzoek naar de sociale constructie van democratisch burgerschap* [The social midfield in Flanders. A study of the social construction of democratic citizenship]. Brussel: VUB Press.
- Elling, A. (2002). *Ze zijn er niet voor gebouwd. In- en Uitsluiting in de Sport naar Sekse en Etniciteit* [They are not built for it. Inclusion and exclusion in sport according to sex and ethnicity]. Nieuwegein: Arko Sports Media.
- Hartmann, D. & Depro, B. (2006). *Rethinking sports-based community crime prevention: A preliminary analysis of the relationship between Midnight Basketball and urban crime rates*. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 30(2), 180-196.
- Hellison, D. (1995). *Teaching responsibility through physical activity*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Hoyng, J., De Knop, P., & Theeboom, M. (1998). *Functies en betekenissen van sport* [Functions and meanings of sport]. *Vrijtijdstudies*, 16(3), 33-55.
- Hylton, K., & Totten, M. (2008). *Community Sports Development*. In K. Hylton and P. Bramham (eds.). *Sports Development, Policy, Process and Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Keller, H., Lamprocht, M., & Stamm, H. (1998). *Social cohesion through sport*. Strasbourg: Committee for the Development of Sport, Council of Europe.
- Kruse, S.E. (2006). *Review of kicking Aids out: Is sport an effective tool in the fight against HIV/Aids? Draft report to NORAD*. Unpublished report.
- Patriksson, M. (1995). *Scientific Review Part 2*. In Council of Europe Press. *The Significance of sport for society - Health, Socialisation, Economy: A Scientific Review*. 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Sport. Strasbourg: Author.
- Pawson, R. (2006). *Evidence-based policy: A realist perspective*. London: Sage.
- Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Scheerder, J. (2004). *Spelen op het middenveld. Vrijtijdsport als ontspanning, ontplooiing en ontmoeting* [Playing on the midfield. Leisure sport as recreation, development and encounter]. Tiel: Lannoo.
- Scheerder, J., M. Theeboom, K. Van den Bergh & De Knop, P. (2006). *Sport en Sociale Cohesie: Een Overzicht van Onderzoeksmateriaal in Vlaanderen* [Sport and social cohesion. An overview of research material in Flanders]. In P. De Knop, J. Scheerder & H. Ponnet (eds.). *Sportbeleid in Vlaanderen - Volume 2: Studies*. Brussel: Publicatiefonds Vlaamse Trainerschool.
- Theeboom, M., & De Knop, P. (1992). *Inventarisatie binnen het jeugd welzijnswerk in Vlaanderen* [Inventarisation in the youth welfare sector]. In P. De Knop & L. Walgrave (eds.). *Sport als integratie. Kansen voor maatschappelijk kwetsbare jongeren* (pp. 119-130). Brussels: Koning Boudewijnstichting.
- Theeboom, M., & De Maesschalck, P. (2006). *Sporten om de hoek: een brede kijk op buurtsport in Vlaanderen* [Sport around the corner: a broad look at neighbourhood sport in Flanders]. Sint-Niklaas: ISB.
- United Nations (2005). *Sport for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*. New York: United Nations.
- Uslaner, E. (1999). *Vrijwilligerswerk en sociaal kapitaal* [Voluntary work and social capital]. In P. Dekker (ed.). *Vrijwilligerswerk vergeleken*, (pp.181-206), Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
- Weiss, C.H. (1993). *Where Politics and Evaluation Research Meet*. *Evaluation Practice*, 14(1), 93-106.



# Sport and Gender Equality. Girls in Focus

---

**Gertrud Pfister**

Professor at the Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences,  
University of Copenhagen (Denmark)



## ARTICLE

**In spite of the well-documented benefits of physical activity, numerous campaigns advocating the adoption of a healthy lifestyle and the endless stream of advice on how to become active and healthy, a considerable percentage of the population -more girls and women than boys and men- lead a sedentary life.**

**In this article I will provide information about the physical activities and sport of girls, reasons for their low participation rates in sport (for all) and recommendations for measures and programmes which encourage and enable girls to become physically active.**

### Introduction and questions

"The King was no longer pleased that his daughter had left the straight and narrow paths of his kingdom and dallied in the by-ways, so he let her have a horse-drawn carriage.

- 'Now you don't have to walk anymore,' he said.
  - 'Now you ought not to walk anymore,' is what he meant.
- And now she couldn't walk anymore is what he achieved" (Anders 1956, 96).

Günther Anders's metaphorical commentary on modern life is today even more appropriate than in 1956. Currently it seems that large parts of the population in Western countries use "carriages" instead of their feet.

In spite of the well-documented benefits of physical activity, numerous campaigns advocating the adoption of a healthy lifestyle and the endless stream of advice on how to become active and healthy, a considerable percentage of the population -more girls and women than boys and men- lead a sedentary life.

In this article I will provide information about the physical activities and sport of girls, reasons for their low participation rates in sport (for all) and recommendations for measures and programmes which encourage and enable girls to become physically active. The focus on childhood and adolescence (10-15 years of age) was chosen because in this phase of life future habits and tastes are adopted and/or consolidated. In addition, worldwide studies with similar designs are available for this age group.

However, we must be aware that there are major differences between girls depending on the circumstances of their lives, including social class, ethnic origin, religion, culture, material environment and where they live. Muslim girls have, for example, in many ways, similar opportunities for being physically active, but they also face specific challenges (Pfister 2010). Although the situation of girls with an ethnic minority background is a growing concern in many countries, for reasons of

space this article will focus on the girls of the mainstream population. I will refer mainly to the situation in European countries, although the information and recommendations can be easily applied to other countries and cultures.

In this article the term "sport" is used in the broad sense of "sport for all", similar to the term "(recreational) physical activities".

### Sports Participation

Several representative surveys in the EU provide an excellent insight into the amount, duration and intensity of physical activities of various groups of the population, including adolescents. In addition, in-depth studies conducted in many countries, regions and cities give a good picture of the participation of the inhabitants in sport, e.g. the types of sport, performance levels, motives, etc.<sup>1</sup>

However, most of the available data are based on self-reports, which have benefits and disadvantages. Comparisons between studies conducted with accelerometers and those based on surveys show that the respondents to questionnaires tend to overestimate the amount and intensity of their activities. Even so, the sports participation rates reported in surveys are rather low, as indicated, for example, in a report published by the Willibald-Gebhard-Institute (based in Germany): "European sports clubs have enjoyed constant participation rates for years. So the degree of organisation in Western European and Scandinavian countries ... lies between 50-70% among children and between 30-50% among young people. However the high degree of participation in sport is not able to compensate for the increasing inactivity in everyday life. About half of Europe's young people does not get the recommended amount of physical activity needed for good health (controlled moderate physical activity per day)."<sup>2</sup>

The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe presented even worse figures in a press release

in December 2006: "Only 34% of European young people aged 11, 13 and 15 years reported enough physical activity to meet current guidelines."<sup>3</sup>

This statement is based on a study of "Health Behaviour in School-aged Children" (HBSC) that provides comprehensive data on activity patterns among children and adolescents across Europe.<sup>4</sup>

The 2006 HBSC study conducted in 41 European countries revealed that 25% of the boys and 19% of the girls (13 years) and 19% of the boys and 12% of the girls (15 years) were at least vigorously active for 60 minutes for five or more days per week (as required in health recommendations).<sup>5</sup> There are large differences between countries: 46% of Slovakian boys (age 15) but only 11% of Swedish boys and 29% of Slovakian girls but only 5% of girls in France and Portugal met the demands of the health experts.<sup>6</sup>

Surveys conducted in various countries revealed a similar picture and showed a dramatic decline in physical activities among 13 to 15-year-old girls. The following statement issued by the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation in the UK reflects the situation in many countries: "There is a crisis in women's sport and fitness in the UK. More than 80% of women and girls are not doing enough physical activity to benefit their health. Young women are now half as active as young men. The situation is forecast to get even worse over the next ten years."<sup>7</sup>

But girls are affected by this trend in different ways and to different degrees. As studies in various Western countries have revealed, a high percentage of adolescent girls with a middle or upper-class background engage in sport, whereas girls with a working-class or an immigrant background are over-represented among the physically inactive population.

The Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS), developed by the WHO and conducted in numerous countries all over the world, confirms the European data and shows large gender differences with regard to physical activities among young people (aged 13-15), differences which are even more significant in Islamic and/or low-income countries.<sup>8</sup>

### Types of activity

Some recreational activities such as swimming, cycling or inline skating are "gender neutral" and popular among both sexes. Other sports and exercises are dominated by the one or the other sex.<sup>9</sup> In spite of culture-specific sports preferences, similar trends of gendered sports practices can be observed in many countries and regions. Boys prefer ball games (football in particular) and risk sports whereas girls opt for expressive/aesthetic activities such as gymnastics, aerobics and dance. Skateboard parks are boys' domains; horse stables are "girls only" places. For numerous girls in Western countries horse riding is an



Source: Fotoquelle: LaufReport.de

-often unrealistic- dream (Pfister 1993).

Boys "appropriate" the environment; they use and enjoy the outdoors whereas girls prefer to stay inside or near their homes. Research shows that boys explore larger spaces than girls and that they use parks or streets for their sporting activities such as kicking around, bmx cycling or parkour, a new form of exercise where the traceurs move through the city overcoming the obstacles on their way (Pfister 1993).

The sports choices of girls, particularly their focus on





organised and relatively expensive activities, clearly contribute to their relatively low activity rate.

#### **Physical activities - why are they important?**

In the current discourses about public health the drop-out rate of girls from sport and physical activities is considered problematic. Health officials and experts are concerned about the prevalence of so-called "lifestyle" diseases among the population; politicians are worried about the increasing expenditure on health care. Current

Danish research shows that not only the activity rates but also the fitness of 16 to 19-year-old girls has decreased considerably in the last few decades. Only 47% of 16-year-old and 35% of 18-year-old girls have a good degree of fitness. 46% are not satisfied with their weight.<sup>10</sup>

A number of studies have been able to identify numerous positive effects of an active lifestyle.<sup>11</sup> According to the World Health Organisation, women seem to draw specific benefits: many women suffer from "disease processes that are associated with inadequate



participation in physical activity", such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, osteoporosis and breast cancer. WHO also notes that physical activity is associated with improved psychological health "by reducing levels of stress, anxiety and depression and can contribute to building self-esteem and confidence."<sup>12</sup>

The health benefits of physical activities are not so clear for children and youth, not least because potential diseases are still years away. However, among other leading experts and organisations, the European Heart Network came to the conclusion that the physical inactivity of children "harms current and future health" (European Heart Network 2001).

Together with the debates on the "obesity epidemic"

and the decrease in children's motor skills, the growing concern about inactivity rates contribute to public discourses which are coined "healthism", i.e. the problematic notion of health as a moral imperative. A "healthism" perspective regards not only body shape and weight but also participation in physical activities as the measure of both one's health and one's "well behaviour" and "political correctness". Research indicates that the increasing pressure to comply with social norms and rules relating to weight and activity rates can be counterproductive (Dworkin and Wachs 2009).

Therefore, it is important to focus on the numerous benefits of physical activities for one's quality of life.



Source: Right To Play

Sport and exercise can have positive effects on social, emotional and mental well-being; they may provide experiences of satisfaction and joy; they foster social networks; and they contribute to empowerment.

### How can we explain gendered sports interests and practices?

#### *Socialisation processes*

In lifelong processes of socialisation individuals acquire "female" and "male" identities in accordance with the prevailing gender arrangements in a particular society. Gender is one of the main structuring principles of a society which distributes rights and obligations as well as responsibilities and tasks according to the main

allocation criteria of gender, age, social class and ethnic background. This allocation is controlled and legitimised by norms and values and by institutions such as religion, science, law, administration, education and the media (Pfister 2008).

Boys and girls are identified, mostly long before birth, as male and female and confronted with the gender order of their society. They learn how to deal with gendered rules, norms, values and paradigms as well as with gendered regimes and scripts which provide the guidelines for "appropriate" behaviour, including gendered body and movement discourses and practices. They grow up in and into a gendered world.

Socio-ecological approaches, as proposed by Hurrelmann (2008) among others, emphasise the interactive dimension and the dialectical relations between individuals and their social and ecological/material environment. According to Bilden (1991), socialisation is self-training in and through cultural practices; Connell (2002) uses the term "active learning". He suggests interpreting the appropriation of gender as the result of numerous "projects" in which children learn gendered scripts, acquire gender competence and develop individual, but at the same time typical, patterns of practices. In encounters with the constraints and possibilities of the gender order, children (and adults) improvise, copy, create and thus develop characteristic strategies. "Over time, especially if the strategies are successful, they become settled, crystallizing as specific patterns of femininity and masculinity" (Connell 2002, p. 82). Sports tastes, rules and activities are likewise appropriated in socialisation processes, in "self-training in and through social practices". Socialisation into sport and physical activities can be described and interpreted as (gendered) projects which are influenced by various factors and processes as well as persons and institutions, among them the family and school.

Several studies indicate that participation in sport is socially "inherited" and that parents have a decisive influence on the interest of their children in sport and games. They provide (gender-specific) toys such as balls for sons and Barbie dolls for daughters. Currently a huge industry successfully indoctrinates girls to ask for pink clothes and Disney princesses. The parents support "appropriate" behaviour, sending their sons to soccer lessons and the girls to ballet. In addition, fathers and mothers serve as male and female role models.

Sport and games are important projects in boys' peer groups; playing together and competing with each other strengthens their relations and teaches competition and cooperation. Sports skills provide prestige among their peers and popularity in male sporting subcultures such as the street ball or skateboard scenes. Girls tend to play (and talk on the phone) with their best girlfriends.





For them fashionable clothes and the right appearance counts more than sporting skills. Peer relations contribute decisively to the construction of gendered sports cultures.

Physical Education (PE) in school should be an important ingredient in the "sports projects" of children and youth. In most countries PE is an obligatory subject in all schools, and children with a working-class and/or immigrant background must participate. However, PE seems to benefit in particular athletic students whereas pupils without any interest in sporting activities and without any skills are often marginalised.

Qualitative research in a Danish high school revealed, for example, that the mixed-sex physical education lessons consisted predominately of ball games that attracted the male students, whilst most girls were either unable or unwilling to become involved. As a consequence, girls participate less intensively in physical education, avoid exertion and physical contests or even refuse to participate at all (Jørgensen 2006; With-Nielsen and Pfister 2010 in press). There are numerous other studies which show that teachers treat male and female

students differently, that girls and boys behave differently and that they learn different skills even in countries where the PE syllabus is not differentiated according to gender.

For large parts of the population sport is "media sport" and the mass media provide similar messages across the globe about the roles of women and men in the world of sport. Sports coverage focuses mostly on men's sport and largely ignores female athletes and women's sporting endeavours. Sport, especially sport in the media, "constructs men's bodies to be powerful, women's bodies to be sexual" (Lorber 1994, p. 43).

The media provide the role models for boys and girls, in sport as well as elsewhere. Power and strength, risk-taking and aggressive body contact are male domains, whereas femininity is connected mostly with slimness and attractiveness.

In this way girls learn that they are not expected to be athletic, and they underestimate their sporting skills (see Pfister 1996, p. 51). Whereas boys judge their bodies more from a functional point of view (however, this is changing),





the female body is a medium of social and sexual attraction. The aesthetic styling of the body is therefore of major importance to girls and women. On account of the discrepancy between ideals and reality girls and women frequently sense a "deficit" with regard to their own bodies. Adornment and various "body projects", from using make-up and dieting to body styling, are thus an important part of everyday life for girls and women (cf. Degele 2004).

Sport is embedded and embodied in habitus (according to Bourdieu 1984); it is a practice of doing gender, and it has to fit the "taste" of an individual as well as his/her lifestyle. Sporting practices are inseparably intertwined with other life lines and contribute to the construction of men's and women's biographies. Sport is part of "doing gender" and integrated into the gender projects of individuals which again support the gendering of sports cultures.

Sports discourses and practices, however, are constantly changing, and these changes also affect the sporting activities of adolescents. The propagation of computer

games may result in a decrease of physical activities among boys whereas the increasing popularity of soccer among girls may entice them to adopt a more physically active lifestyle.

### Opportunities and barriers

Participation in sport depends to a large degree on the environment and the opportunities for being physically active.

The WHO highlights a number of reasons for physical inactivity among women: "Women often have lower income than men, which may represent a barrier to access to physical activities (PA). Women's workload in the home may limit the time available for leisure and thus for PA. Women may have limited mobility to travel to PA facilities. Cultural expectations may restrict their participation in some form of PA."<sup>13</sup> These barriers also have an impact on the opportunities of girls to participate in sport and exercise.

Even in Europe people report widely differing opportunities of being able to participate in sport or physical activities. Whereas in Scandinavian countries more than 80% of the respondents agreed that the area where they lived offered many opportunities for being physically active, less than 50% of the respondents from Portugal were of the same opinion. Similarly, the answers referring to the availability of sports centres or sports clubs in the neighbourhood showed "North-South" differences.<sup>14</sup> Based on the comments of the WHO, quoted above, it may be assumed that the lack of a sports-friendly environment affects girls and women to a higher degree than the male population.

As far as we know from available statistics, sports clubs have a much larger drop-out rate among adolescent girls than among boys. This raises the question whether the lack of attractive sports programmes contributes to the decrease in sports interest among girls. The same is true for the sports and physical activity programmes of other sports providers, among them churches or cities. Often sport, such as street ball, is used as a means to solve problems with violent groups of boys and young men. Girls who do not cause visible problems are often ignored.

### Educating cities - what can be done?

There are numerous opportunities of influencing the physical activity patterns of girls (and boys as well). Some of these interventions will need financial and manpower resources. On the other hand, men's sport -for example, the construction and maintenance of football stadia or the organisation of matches (police, security!!)- costs large amounts of money and resources, and nobody complains about this. Some of this money could, and should, be invested in physical activities for girls and "sport for all"



for the population. In many cities this may already be a reality.

Intervention strategies might include:

- Information about opportunities for physical activities and their benefits in places where people gather (schools, workplaces, shopping centres, doctors' surgeries).
- Creation of a movement-friendly environment, a safe opportunity for jogging, hiking, cycling, playing ball. Children's playgrounds can be converted into "sports arenas". If no spaces are available, streets can be closed for cars at weekends.
- Encouragement of the integration of physical activities into everyday life, e.g. as a means of transport. Campaigns such as "we cycle to work" could be an incentive.
- Establishment of sports facilities at a short distance from residential quarters (research shows that sports facilities are used if they are in walking distance).
- Provision of safe and easy access to existing sports facilities and programmes (e.g. lights on the ways).
- Establishment of "sports groups" which meet regularly, walk together to a gym hall or a sports ground, phone and remind each other, etc.
- Organisation of "sport for all" events, e.g. hiking afternoons, jogging hours or inline skate nights, or relay runs where members of sports clubs, students of schools or employees of a factory or office with at least as many female as male participants compete.
- Adaptation of sports facilities to the needs and wishes of girls and women (e.g. separate shower facilities if Muslim girls and women are active there).
- Promotion of inclusive and "girl-friendly" physical

activities such as rope skipping, skating, climbing on climbing walls which allows the participation of larger groups with different skills.

- Creation of incentives for existing sports providers for recruiting girls and women.
- Information about the barriers and opportunities for being physically active and education of parents, teachers, sport providers, etc. about the benefits of an active lifestyle.
- Changes in the PE curricula and of PE teacher training with the aim of enabling girls to participate in various sports and physical activities (including those which are labelled male sports).
- Availability of school yards and gyms for physical activities, games, skating, biking, etc. after school hours.
- Organisation of courses, programmes and/or events for girls, e.g. skating nights, street ball, girls and women's runs.
- Campaigns, e.g. competitions between schools, for the best sports programmes for girls, or between clubs with the most female participants in a 10km run.
- Promotion of female sports stars and/or fit women as role models for girls and women.

I am aware that many cities are already engaged in promoting sport and physical activities for girls and women and that they are using these, and more and maybe totally different, "best practices". I am also aware that my analyses and proposals are not taking the diversity of girls and women all over the world into account but are heavily influenced by my Western perspective. But I hope that this article is a point of departure for increasing efforts and combining forces in order to improve gender equality in sport as well as in other areas of life. ●

1. Naul, R. and Hoffmann, D.: Healthy Children in Sound Communities: a European community setting project. [http://www.wgi.de/media/Pdf/HealthyChildreninSoundCommunity-pic\\_47434.pdf](http://www.wgi.de/media/Pdf/HealthyChildreninSoundCommunity-pic_47434.pdf);  
See also Sallis et al. 2000; Vilhjalmsson and Kristjansdottir, 2003; Ringgaard and Nielsen 2004; Seabra et al. 2008  
2. [http://www.wgi.de/media/Pdf/lifestyle\\_sedentariness\\_english\\_819279.pdf](http://www.wgi.de/media/Pdf/lifestyle_sedentariness_english_819279.pdf)  
3. [http://www.euro.who.int/mediacentre/PR/2006/20061117\\_1](http://www.euro.who.int/mediacentre/PR/2006/20061117_1)  
4. The HBSC was initiated in 1982; the first cross-national survey in five countries was conducted in 1983/84; see [www.hbsc.org](http://www.hbsc.org)  
5. Since the last survey in 2002, the percentage of active children has decreased. The HBSC data provide information about trends, but have to be interpreted with caution. Country-specific conditions may not have been satisfactorily taken into consideration.  
6. A snapshot of the health of young people in Europe, a report prepared for the European Commission Conference on Youth Health, Brussels, Belgium,

9-10 July 2009. <http://94.23.50.42/youth/documents/A%20snapshot%20of%20the%20health%20of%20young%20people%20in%20Europe.pdf>; see also European Commission 2006.

7. <http://www.womeninsportconference.com/homepage.asp>  
8. Global school-based student health survey (GSHS), initiated by the WHO and conducted in numerous countries, shows the same gender-specific patterns of physical activities. <http://www.cdc.gov/GSHS/de>  
9. Skolebørns deltagelse i idræt og andre fysiske aktiviteter i Rudersdal [www.cisc.sdu.dk/Publikationer/qKL2006\\_4.pdf](http://www.cisc.sdu.dk/Publikationer/qKL2006_4.pdf)  
10. <http://www.dgi.dk/redaktionen/dui/14-2003/piger.aspx> MULD survey  
11. There is an abundance of literature, see e.g. Sundhedsstyrelsen 2006.  
12. <http://www.euractiv.com/en/sports/women-sport/article-137664>  
13. <http://www.euractiv.com/en/sports/women-sport/article-137664>  
14. Eurobarometer "Physical Activity"; [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_183\\_6\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_183_6_en.pdf)



Caxias do Sul (Brazil)

## Bibliography

- Anders, G.: Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen: Über die Seele im Zeitalter der zweiten industriellen Revolution. München: Beck 1956.
- Bilden, H.: Geschlechtsspezifische Sozialisation. In: Hurrelmann, K./Ulrich, D. (eds.): Neues Handbuch der Sozialisationsforschung. Weinheim/Basel: Beltz 1991, 279-301.
- Bourdieu, P.: Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste. Harvard University Press 1994.
- Connell, R.: Gender. Cambridge: Polity 2002.
- Degele, N.: Sich schön machen: Zur Soziologie von Geschlecht und Schönheitshandeln. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag 2004.
- Dworkin, S. and Wachs, F.: Body Panic: Gender, Health, and the Selling of Fitness. New York: New York University Press 2009.
- European Commission (2006): Eurobarometer: Health and food. Brussels. Available online: [http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_publication/eb\\_food\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_publication/eb_food_en.pdf), [accessed 24.11.2009].
- European Heart Network (ed.): Children and Young People - the Importance of Physical Activity. Brussels 2001. <http://www.ehnheart.org/files/phyactivity-084635A.pdf>
- Hurrelmann, K.: Einführung in die Sozialisationstheorie. Weinheim: Beltz 2008.
- Lorber, J.: Breaking the Bowls: Degendering and Feminist Change. New York: W.W. Norton & Company 2005.
- Lorber, J.: Paradoxes of gender. New Haven, London: Yale University Press 1994.
- Naul, R. and Brettschneider, W.-D. (2005). Young people's lifestyles and sedentariness in Europe. Acta Universitatis Carolinae Kínathropologica, 41 (2005), 2, 25-34.
- Pfister, G. and Fasting, K.: Geschlechterkonstruktionen auf dem Fussballplatz : Aussagen von Fußballspielerinnen zu Männlichkeits- und Weiblichkeitskonzepten. In: Jütting, D. (ed.): Die lokal-globale Fußballkultur: wissenschaftlich beobachtet. Münster: Waxmann 2004, 137-152.
- Pfister, G.: Appropriation of the Environment, Motor Experiences and Sporting Activities of Girls and Women. In: International Review for Sociology of Sport 28 (1993), 159-173.
- Pfister, G.: Doing Sport ist Doing Gender. In: Farrokhzad, S. and Nikodem, C.: Arenen der Weiblichkeit: Frauen, Körper, Sport. Köln: Verlag des Vereins Beiträge zur feministischen Theorie und Praxis e.V. 2008, 13-29.
- Pfister, G.: Fitness und Sportengagement als soziales Erbe – theoretische Überlegungen und empirische Befunde. In: Müller, N. (ed.): Gesellschaft und Sport als Feld wissenschaftlichen Handelns: Festschrift für Manfred Messing. Niederrhein: Schors Verlag 2007, 287-307.
- Pfister, G.: Muslim Women in the Diaspora: Sport related Theories, Discourses and Practices - Analysing the Situation in Denmark. In: Benn, T., Pfister, G. Jawad, H. (eds.): Muslim Women and Sport. London: Routledge 2010 Forthcoming.
- Pfister, G.: Zwischen neuen Freiheiten und alten Zwängen. Körper- und Bewegungskultur von Mädchen und Frauen. In: Flade, A. and Kustor, B. (eds.): Raus aus dem Haus. Mädchen erobern die Stadt. Frankfurt/New York: Campus 1996, 45-66.
- Pilgaard, M.: Danskernes motions- og sportsvaner 2007 - nøgletal og tendenser. København: Idrættens Analyseinstitut 2008.
- Raudsepp, L. and Viira, R.: Influence of Parents' and Siblings' Physical Activity on Activity Levels of Adolescents. In: European Journal of Physical Education 5 (2000), 169-178.
- Ringgaard, L. W. and Nielsen, G. A. Fysisk aktivitet i dagligdagen blandt 16-20-årige i Danmark, København: Kræftens Bekæmpelse & Sundhedsstyrelsen 2004.
- Sallis, J. F., Prochaska, J. and Taylor, W.: A review of correlates of physical activity of children and adolescents. IN: Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise 32 (2000), 963-975.
- Seabra, A. F. et al.: Associations between sport participation, demographic and socio-cultural factors in Portuguese children and adolescents. In: European Journal of Public Health 18 (2008), 25-30.
- Sundhedsstyrelsen: Fysisk Aktivitet og Evidens - Livsstilssygdomme, folkesygdomme og risikofaktorer mv. København: Sundhedsstyrelsen 2006.
- Vilhjalmsón, R. and Kristjansdóttir, G.: Gender differences in physical activity in older children and adolescents: the central role of organized sport'. In: Social Science & Medicine 56 (2003), 363-374.
- With-Nielsen, N. and Pfister, G.: Gender constructions and negotiations in PE - case studies. In: Sport, Education and Society, 2010, in print.





# Sport and Accessibility for All. Something all cities need

**Enrique Rovira-Beleta Cuyás**

Architect and Lecturer responsible for the subjects to do with accessibility at the School of Architecture, International University of Catalonia (Spain)

**It is essential to incorporate accessibility into all the projects and plans in our cities in view of the ageing of the population and the improved quality of life demanded by society. Eliminating architectural and communication barriers is not simply something needed by people with disability, but is also of benefit to all citizens. In my opinion, good accessibility is one that exists, but goes unnoticed by most users.**

### General criteria

In this 21st century, *cities* are experiencing many changes: population growth as the result of an extremely rapid rise in the number of foreigners; ageing of the population; an increased number of people living alone; a falling birth rate, etc.

Improving the quality of life of the population, and particularly that of persons with limited mobility and/or impaired communication (PLM), has been one of the priority aims of the work carried out by governments and municipal and local institutions in the developed countries in the last few years. Current rules and regulations on this matter have contributed to the construction of spaces and buildings that do not discriminate against any users.

Our society is experiencing a marked evolution towards the integration of PLM who represent 30% of the population of developed countries. This group is defined as all those users of the city with limited or impaired mobility, whether permanent or temporary, for example, as the result of an injury or having to carry something heavy.

There is an increasing desire among the group of persons with major disabilities to be present and participate in social life. However, these people cannot be fully and effectively integrated unless the different spaces and environments (housing, work places, schools and universities, services, tourism and leisure facilities, means of transport, public highways, etc.) are accessible so that they can lead their daily lives normally and independently.

There is a need to eliminate physical and sensorial barriers, bearing in mind that a good design must take into account all the various different users, whatever their characteristics and needs, in order to achieve a *Design for All* which will, in turn, improve the quality of life of all people.

*Sport* is an activity that is always beneficial for improving everyone's health and quality of life. Because of our professional and work commitments, we normally use sports facilities at particular times of the day. So at mid-morning and/or mid-afternoon, these facilities tend to be used by children/schools and/or elderly/retired people to improve their physical condition. They all have temporarily or permanently reduced mobility and/or impaired communication and need these facilities to be as

accessible as possible so as to enhance their autonomy, comfort and safety.

In this 21st century, the concept of the *elimination of architectural barriers* is well known and many countries have rules and regulations in place regarding this that must be adhered to. However, we have to promote accessibility in such a way that it goes unnoticed and costs as little as possible by including it in all designs and their details so as to enhance the quality of the spaces, elements, services and products used by everyone, whether or not their abilities are at all limited. This means that *accessibility* is the feature of town planning, buildings, means of transport, communication systems, furniture, information and signs, goods, products, services and everything around us in our towns and cities that facilitates the autonomy of any person and also reveals the abilities of persons with disability.

As society more and more demands a better quality of life, we must design our cities with the characteristics of all persons in mind, including people with major disabilities. In this way, we will no doubt improve ease of use and safety for all citizens, because:

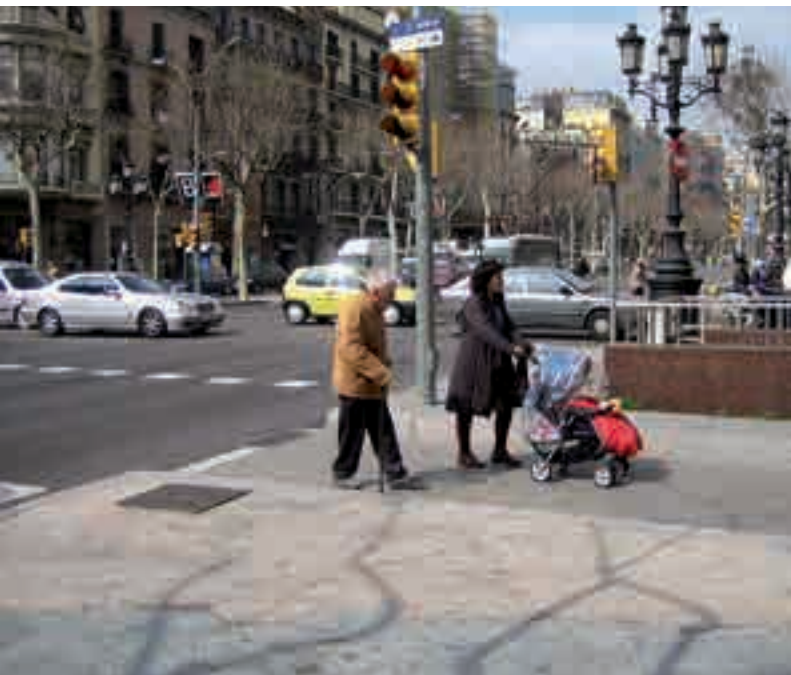
- wherever someone using a wheelchair can move, everyone else can certainly do so more easily;
- if we devise signs suitable for sight- and/or hearing-impaired people, all those of us who can see and hear will certainly be able to do so even better, and we will also prevent those who are absent-minded (in other words, people who are temporarily blind or deaf) from having accidents;

For example, introducing accessibility in a sports facility does not consist only in applying a set of corrective measures into a plan that has already been drawn up, retouching it or modifying it here or there, but rather in incorporating accessibility as a new variable from the outset that will have an influence from the very start on

---

**“Good accessibility is that which exists, but goes unnoticed by users, with low or no cost on many occasions”**

---



Example of an accessible pedestrian crossing suitable for all users (Barcelona)

the gestation and design of the final solution, taking on board the diversity of its end users:

- persons at the height of their abilities;
- persons whose abilities are temporarily or permanently limited (persons with sensory limitations on their sight and/or hearing; persons able to walk, but with difficulty; wheelchair users; persons with cognitive difficulties; etc.).

Fortunately, there is practically no incompatibility between the needs of these two groups, so *Designing for All* consists in having thorough knowledge of, and not simply being aware of, the characteristics of persons with major disabilities in order to achieve designs which, by incorporating small details, often involving no more than making a space a couple of centimetres wider, are all suitable for a greater number of people, including those with severe disabilities. And yet these slight modifications are in many cases not even appreciable.

For all these reasons, I dare say that one of the basic sets of measurements employed in architecture this century will be that of the wheelchair (1.20 m x 0.70 m), because wherever a wheelchair can get through, everyone else will certainly be able to get through more easily. Therefore the dimensions of a wheelchair are one of the sets of measurements determining the need for space in order for users to be able to manoeuvre, go from one level to another, reach objects and control their balance. Similarly, signs and information designed for people with visual and/or auditory disabilities will undoubtedly improve perception of them by all citizens who can see and hear without any difficulty.

### Accessibility in sports facilities

We must guarantee the accessibility, use and enjoyment of the spaces, itineraries, elements, services, goods and products of sports facilities, without any architectural or communication barriers. In this way, we will increase the



Mountain bike (Girona)

number of citizens doing physical and sports activities, including the group of people with major disabilities. And, what is more, we will raise awareness of the issue among all the actors involved in promoting sports and physical activity, and the general public who share the use of the facility in question with people with major disabilities (PMD).

With accessibility we ensure that children with disabilities have equal opportunity with regard other children to take part in recreational, leisure and sports activities, including those engaged in at school.

It is important for accessibility to be implemented in all sport facilities even in those not so common such as golf, horse riding, trekking, volleyball, beach volleyball, scuba diving, sailing, target shooting, hiking, flying model aeroplanes, cycling, skiing, water skiing, rugby, etc.

### The main difficulties for doing sports activities facing persons with limited mobility and/or impaired communication (PLM)

The commonest difficulties encountered every day by PLM wanting to do some kind of sports activity are:

- *Difficulties in manoeuvring* which people with major limitations come up against for moving in a straight line, going through a door, transferring, etc.
- *Difficulties for moving from one level to another* because of stairs or high steps without a handrail, lack of lifting appliances for wheelchair users and the construction of very steep ramps.
- *Control and balance difficulties* faced by people who need the aid of a handrail or bars providing grip and support to keep their balance while effecting the different types of transfer; when walking on smooth and slippery surfaces; or in using switches, handles, taps, etc. that are not fitted with a lever or pushbutton.
- *Difficulties encountered by persons with sensory disabilities in reaching devices and information* by hand,





Swimming pool suitable for all users, with a ramp and stairs for getting into the water. Municipal sports complex in Sant Esteve de Sesrovires (Barcelona)

sight or hearing; in reaching objects in the horizontal or vertical plane; in detecting or avoiding obstacles and holes; finding directions; and communicating with the environment.

#### **Priority actions for achieving total accessibility in a sports facility building**

- **Access:** a study is made to see whether access is on the level or there are any projections or differences in height, or there is an alternative itinerary; and whether there are appropriate access controls, doors and opening systems, flooring, slopes, lighting and contrasting colours and textures, and whether there are suitably signposted parking places reserved for vehicles of persons with limited mobility.
- **Horizontal movement:** a study is made of the suitability of the vestibules, reception areas and places where the public is attended to for persons with physical and/or sensory disabilities; of the suitability of the information and signs for sight/hearing impaired persons; of the interior itineraries and the exterior itineraries adjacent to the building, looking at the dimensions of the routes, the changes of direction and the access landing, the doors, the flooring, the banisters and handrails, possible obstacles, height differences and whether they can be overcome by ramps or not, as well as the lighting and its possible contrasts.
- **Vertical movement:** for buildings of two or more storeys a study is made of the elements used for this vertical communication, be they stairs, ramps and/or lifts. After this analysis if required changes are introduced in order to also allow their use by persons with limited mobility and/or impaired communication.
- **Toilets and changing rooms:** a study is made of the toilets that can be used by persons with limited mobility and their size in relation to the toilets for general use. If

there are changing rooms, these are also included in the study.

- **Furniture and equipment for use by the public:** a study is made of the design and location of the items of furniture, such as counters where the public is attended to, telephone booths, tables, etc. The places reserved for spectators in wheelchairs or with some sensory impairment and those accompanying them are also included under this heading in venues for watching sports, stands, terraces and the like.
- **Signs and communication:** these are studied at the construction stage of buildings, in ephemeral architecture, in exhibition items, information panels and documentation to be given to the general public, making sure they are also accessible to sight- and/or hearing impaired persons.

#### **Barcelona, an educational, sporting and accessible city**

Thanks to the Olympic and Paralympic Games held in Barcelona in 1992, the city was transformed. Major road infrastructures were put in place, with ring roads linking the different competition areas, making the city suitable for persons with disabilities: pedestrian crossings with ramps along their full width and equipped with acoustic traffic lights; public transport with low-deck buses, taxis accessible to wheelchair users, Metro stations with lifts from street level, and toilets suitable for PLM all over the city. The city's airport, hotels and camp sites were also adapted for use by clients and guests with disabilities, benefitting all citizens, as they improved their ease of use and safety.

For the first time, the Paralympic Games, which are the biggest gathering of competitive sports in the world for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities, were held in the same sports facilities as the Olympic Games.



Source: Special Olympics Catalunya

At Barcelona '92 all the sports events attracted a large number of spectators. This led to increased social awareness of such matters in the city and its surrounding districts, no doubt helping, in the decades following the Games, to make access to physical and sporting activities by persons with disabilities a more attainable goal in the city and the towns around it.

The working methodology of the Games' Organising Committee consisted in including the largest number of such access improvements on a permanent basis in the works and thereby obtaining a significant number of sports facilities, amenities, Olympic and Paralympic housing, means of transport and sign/communication systems that are perfectly accessible by persons with limited mobility and/or sensory impairments.

This work was carried out in collaboration with various teams of professionals and those in charge of the technical direction and control of the works, developers and builders, etc. operating in the Games' amenities and facilities. This led to these teams becoming highly aware of the issue, which, together with the fact that their work gained recognition in the sector, led in turn to the spread of the solutions adopted to enable access by PLM to

various facilities and the elimination of the architectural and communication barriers existing in them prior to the setting up of the Accessibility Area in the Paralympics Division of the Games' Organising Committee (COOB'92).

Using the same sports competition and training facilities for the Olympic Games and the Paralympics resulted in fully accessible sports facilities, an economic saving for the organisers and amenities that, after the Games, can be used by all citizens for their sports activities, whether or not they have any disabilities. The same thing occurred with the buildings, the Olympic Village and, particularly, the means of transport that the inhabitants of Barcelona now use every day.

Today Barcelona is a city with a long sports tradition that has a large powerful network of associations born of its citizens' desire to organise themselves and set up sports clubs and companies with the capacity to promote sport, compete at a high level and manage sports facilities with great efficiency.

#### Proposals for the future

- Foster the creation of sports facilities in cities and rural areas as centres for social, cultural and sports



activities, accessible to people with any kind of disability, encouraging social interaction and broadening their function as places where people of all ages meet each other and can combine leisure and family life.

- Promote sports courses for people with disabilities in: schools, hospitals and rehabilitation centres, and institutions and associations of people with disabilities.
- Prepare a basic guidebook on the care of persons with disabilities to be distributed to all sports facility professionals providing them with information on how to treat and manage the activities of persons with limited mobility and/or impaired communication.
- Set up municipal guidance and advice specialised services for people responsible for sports facilities that can also inform the persons with disability themselves of the help and grants available for them to do sport.
- Prepare a "guide to good accessibility practices for sports facilities (elimination of architectural and communication barriers)" with guidelines on how to proceed when designing and managing urban and architectural spaces, their communication and information systems, their goods and services, and their usability by persons with major disabilities and/or persons with temporarily limited mobility/impaired communication, to supplement and expand on the rules and regulations on accessibility in each country. ●

## References

- Guía de accesibilidad para empresas.  
Authors: Enrique Rovira-Beleta Cuyás / Ana Folch Mendes.  
Fundación Adecco / Club Excelencia en Sostenibilidad (2009).
- Guía de la Barcelona accesible.  
Authors: Enrique Rovira-Beleta Cuyás / Ana Folch Mendes.  
Viena Ediciones (2006).
- Accesibilidad en el medio físico para personas con ceguera o deficiencia visual.  
Dirección General. Departamento de Servicios Sociales para Afiliados.  
Sección de Acción Social e Integración Laboral.  
ONCE (Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles) (2003).
- Accesibilidad para personas sordas. Recopilación de barreras de comunicación y sus soluciones.  
ACAPPS - Associació Catalana per a la Promoció de les Persones Sordes,  
FESOCA - Federació de Sords de Catalunya (2003).
- White paper on accessibility.  
Author: Enrique Rovira-Beleta Cuyás.  
Documents of the Museum.  
Olympic Museum collection published by the International Olympic Committee (2002).
- Codi d'accessibilitat de Catalunya.  
Departament de Benestar Social, Generalitat de Catalunya (1995)

Source: Special Olympics Catalunya







# **Experiences**

---

# Get Moving and Get in Shape, experience of the Campaign in Mexico City

## **Sonia Aguirre Garcés**

Director of Health Promotion;

## **José Luis Navarro Paredes**

Coordinator of Health Promotion and Ageing Culture;

## **Mónica Hurtado González**

Assistant Director of Promotion for At-Risk Groups,  
City of Mexico

**In recent decades, the living conditions and lifestyles of the Mexican population have been modified substantially. Such modifications are seen, among others, in significant changes in eating habits and reduced physical activity, factors that are closely linked to a greater risk of developing excess weight and obesity, as well as to chronic diseases.**

**The trend cannot be reversed with curative strategies alone; we need to act on aspects that are closely linked to the change in lifestyle in order to influence healthy behaviour and attitudes that will improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of Mexico City.**

**After one year, the “Get Moving and Get in Shape” campaign in Mexico City continues to gain importance in the public sphere, seeking to raise awareness in the population in favour of adopting healthy eating habits and an active lifestyle.**

## **Background**

One of the main risk factors associated to the current epidemiological profile of Mexico is the growing problem of excess weight and obesity at all stages of life, which has grown sharply in the last 20 years, making a comprehensive intervention necessary in order to stop this trend.

The capital of the country, the Federal District, is a place where excess weight and obesity have increased over the national average in all age groups, as follows: it is found in 8 out of 10 women, 7 out of 10 men and almost 4 of every 10 children of school age, in other words around 5 million people in the capital suffer from it, out of a population of over 8 million inhabitants.

In turn, teenagers spend on average more than 12 hours a week in front of screens (television, computer, video games) and 8 out of 10 adults aged over 30 do no physical activity of any kind.

In the light of this situation, the Department of Health of the Federal District has implemented the Programme for the Prevention and Control of Excess Weight and Obesity. Its aim is to develop technical and operational strategies to promote health and healthy lifestyles as well as to provide medical attention and epidemiological control. This is done through comprehensive and specialised attention to excess weight and obesity at Health Centres and Specialist Clinics, but above all through the creation of the “Get Moving and Get in Shape” awareness campaign.

### The campaign

The area responsible for the execution of the campaign is the Directorate of Health Promotion through the Coordinator of Health Promotion and Ageing Culture's Sub-Directorate of Health Promotion for At-Risk Groups at Government events and the Healthcare Jurisdictions at Health Centres. The team is made up of doctors, nutritionists, physical activators, social workers and health promoters.

The general aim of the campaign is to generate an extensive informed and organized social movement to promote healthy lifestyles, through actions to provide eating guidelines and promote physical activity. The specific goals of the campaign include:

1. Increasing awareness among inhabitants of the risk of being overweight or obese through education for health and promotional and preventive actions.
2. Increasing and strengthening actions that provide guidelines to good eating and physical activity to favour the adoption of healthy lifestyles by the population.
3. Detecting and referring cases to the network of Health Centres in Mexico City.

The campaign is based on developing 6 strategies with the aim of achieving wider cover of the population in its habitual environments and activities:

- *Get moving in everyday life.* This strategy aims to offer information and guidelines for healthy eating at locations with the presence of a large number of people, such as mass events and fairs.
- *Get moving at the office.* A strategy aimed at civil servants of the Government of the Federal District, to promote physical activity, provide guidelines on how to eat healthily and teach some basic techniques that help to handle stress.
- *Get moving in the city.* The aim of this strategy is to display key messages of the campaign in public spaces and junctions with heavy traffic.
- *Get moving at school.* A strategy aimed at offering

guidelines for healthy eating through educational activities and promoting physical activity among other promotional matters through the School Health programme which has already been implemented in 240 primary schools, and in the secondary schools included in the Universal Baccalaureate Stimulus Programme (PREBU) "PREPA SI" in Mexico City.

- *Get moving in the park.* Actions to promote physical activity in open spaces where people meet to get exercise.
- *Get moving for your health.* These are actions that contribute to the dietary treatment of users of the health services through a range of material and training of staff.

### The experience

The campaign activities started in March 2008 on a sporadic basis with the "Get moving in everyday life", strategy at mass fairs held at different places in the city. Likewise, in April the activities were added to the Sunday cycle riding activities of the "Get on your Bike" Programme organized by the Secretariat of the Environment at the Paseo de la Reforma (a busy and important avenue in the Mexican capital), an activity which is still carried out.

However, the "Get Moving and Get in Shape" campaign started officially on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2008 with a mass Latin dance class, and with mass promotion and advertising actions, attended by 5,000 people.

The activities of the "Get moving in everyday life" strategy have revolved around physical activity sessions, forums providing nutritional information and modules at which weight, height, waist and hip measurements are taken, which are the basic indicators for determining the state of nutrition of a person. Based on the results, personalized advising is offered and referral to the Health Centres for medical and nutritional attention.

In turn, the "Get moving at school" strategy, through the "PREPA SI" Programme, has offered nutritional advising services to approximately 3,000 secondary school pupils.

Since the campaign started, its activities have managed







to position themselves firmly, which has made it possible for the inhabitants of the city to seek out the attention modules on a habitual basis, to carry out physical activities and review their state of nutrition.

As an example of this positioning, the first anniversary was marked by a celebration which brought together approximately ten thousand people of different age groups who had benefited from the campaign, carrying out activities with the use of hula hoops.

In a year of uninterrupted activities, around 1 million 300 thousand people have been reached and have got moving and have received advice on healthy eating, which means that almost 15% of the total population of Mexico City has received some kind of service through the “Get Moving and Get in Shape” campaign.

### The future

The “Get moving at school” strategy in primary schools is a priority, because of the benefits that can be obtained in the form of the quality of life of the children when they are adults, thanks to promoting healthy eating habits and an active lifestyle.

Taking the “Get moving at the office” strategy to government employees of Mexico City is also a priority, and the process to apply this strategy has already started and the first results are expected to be available soon.

In turn, “Get moving for your health” is already working on the training programme for the team of staff, in order to use the material prepared by the Directorate of Health Promotion which will start to be distributed soon at diabetes clinics and at medical specialty units (UNEMES), to support the treatment of people with chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and of course excess weight and obesity.

The next goal of the campaign as a whole will be to work on better positioning by reinforcing strategies such as “Get moving in the city”, and starting up “Get moving in the park” so that the population is completely aware of the importance of a healthy diet and daily physical activities to improve their quality of life, on one hand, and help to slow down the trend of increased numbers of overweight and obese people and the associated diseases, on the other. ●



# The Granollers Cup, handball that makes a city

## Josep Maria Junqueras Pujadas

Sports Councillor of the City of Granollers (Spain)

**In Granollers, sport and education have a life of their own. Sporting organizations collaborate to make the city, to build projects. Granollers Handball Club, with 66 years of history, is one of the most committed, and the Granollers Cup is one of its best initiatives. Competition, effort, tournament, commitment, resolve, but also companionship, solidarity, knowledge, understanding, affection, friendliness and friendship. The city participates enthusiastically in the Granollers Cup, an event that, after eleven years, has become a tradition and is now a permanent fixture in our festive and social calendar.**

Granollers has a large number of sportsmen and women, sports organizations and clubs. Our city can be regarded as the birthplace of Spanish handball. It was here that the first handball players in Spain were seen, and where Granollers Handball Club, founded in 1944, has obtained a number of sporting awards over the last 66 years: several national and international championships and the satisfaction of being the first Spanish club to win a European title. But the pride of the city, its greatest satisfaction, is its sporting youth. Training different generations of players who have obtained titles in all age-group categories, from the 8-10 and 11-12 categories, to the junior categories up to the age of 18. These players go on to form part of the club's first team as well as the first team of other Spanish and European clubs. It is, therefore, the club's youth training, its educational project, that is at the heart of the club's structure. This is its most profound meaning and is what determines the goals for its projects.

Sport, education and city, three words that clearly express the event we are presenting: *the Granollers Cup*.

It is an international handball competition organized by Granollers Handball Club, with the participation of the city, that mobilizes more than 3,000 young people aged between 10 and 20, and is held in the last week of June.

This club, with its tradition and history, has maintained excellent relations with several clubs in Spain and other countries around the world. It takes part regularly in a



number of national and international tournaments and is always present at the best competitions. This fact makes it possible to achieve one of the club's main goals: to promote handball and its sporting and formative values and to become a proud sign of identity for Granollers. This has also been the fundamental reason behind the 11 editions of the Granollers Cup that have been held so far and which have made Granollers, for one week in the year, the world capital of handball. The club and the City Council have worked to build a sporting, educational and cultural event that is an attraction for sportsmen and women and





allows cultural and social organizations to participate in a common project. A project that involves the essential participation of dozens of volunteers and of many citizens who play an active role in this activity, which has become, without a shadow of a doubt, a new part of our heritage.

What has made the Granollers Cup today a worldwide focal point for handball? In our opinion, this is the result of an interesting sum of factors:

- Granollers, a municipality with 60,455 inhabitants in the province of Barcelona, is a city with good communications, close to the main road and rail infrastructures of Catalonia. Right next to the AP-7 motorway, connecting the city to the interior of the peninsula via Lleida and Zaragoza, and the Mediterranean coast, from Andalusia to France; two railway lines that stop at the city which, via Barcelona, take you anywhere. And close to Barcelona airport, 40 minutes away by car. With many places of tourist interest within a radius of 20 km (Barcelona, Catalan Modernist Trail, the Montseny Natural Park, and the coast of the Maresme). With a wide and extensive range of accommodation possibilities (1,200 hotel beds and 17 schools in Granollers, as well as summer camp facilities and hostels in neighbouring towns and villages). And, above all with a structure of sports facilities capable of hosting an event of this magnitude (seven regulation-sized 20m x 40m indoor courts and another seven outdoor fields, all with changing-rooms and showers, within a radius of 500 m).
- Right from the first year, the Granollers Cup has been noted for its good organization, focused on the players and their needs. A schedule received in advance and assignment of teams to their accommodation, an efficient canteen service with suitable meals, a fleet of coaches to transport players from their accommodation to the handball court and professional refereeing provided by the Catalan and the International Handball

Federations to guarantee a good competition. The Sports Palace in Granollers is the unsurpassable organizational, management and leisure centre for the event. This municipal sports facility, which has been used in the Olympic Games, has a bar, outlet for selling competition products and a medical service.

- To carry out this project, the most important asset is the human capital: people. Granollers is a city of major sporting events and the collaboration of volunteers is fundamental. The Granollers Cup can be held because more than 150 volunteers are involved in it. Group guides, timekeepers and scorekeepers, information attendants, computer operators, vendors of souvenirs... Many of these volunteers have links to the club: parents, board members and players, but there are also people outside of the club who for years have been devoted these days to collaborating with the tournament.
- Another fundamental aspect for the success of the Granollers Cup is its planning. When the school year starts, in the month of September, the organization of the Granollers Cup for the following year also starts. The club announces the tournament on its website and by mail. The dates (last week in June) and the outline of the competition are determined, and its image is presented. The term for registering to participate also commences. Starting in January, in conjunction with the Education Service of the City Council, the schools that will become accommodation during the competition are visited. Together with the headmaster of each school, the most suitable locations are sought and the regulatory framework is agreed, which will be distributed to the group co-ordinators. This is also the time to define the zones that will be used by the organization, the dining areas, signalling, transport, welcoming services... During the month of March, the Federations are contacted to agree on refereeing and possible training courses and





conferences with the participation of technical experts from all round the world. The registration period ends in April, with the demand from teams wishing to participate often being higher than the capacity the city can offer. The last organizational task is to co-ordinate the functions of the volunteers in the sports, logistical and informational areas. The City Council of Granollers provides organizational support and the use of the sporting and educational facilities. It also contributes a specific grant. The Provincial Authority of Barcelona (Diputació de Barcelona) also collaborates financially.

- Finally, this tournament is also exceptional thanks to its small and large details. The people of Granollers live the tournament, they live it from the courts and fields of play, but they also live it with friendliness and acceptance: the men and women of Granollers act as hosts and hostesses for the players, who, rather than participants, feel like guests in the city. Granollers is handball - of course - but it is more than that. In the Granollers Cup, the competition is complemented with a range of educational, social and cultural activities that ensure that the visitors take away with them images and knowledge of Granollers that they could not get just from the handball courts. In our city, we like to say that Granollers is historically a crossroads, where people meet, interact and then each one returns home with a bag full of memories, experiences, addresses and friends. The Granollers Cup is one of the best examples of this. Young people take advantage of this event to know the reality of other countries and to have friends in the five continents. To make their world a slightly bigger and more comprehensible place.

In short, Granollers is identified with the Granollers Cup, with the project of Granollers' Handball Club and with the sport of handball. The city hosts with enthusiasm an event that, after eleven years, has become a tradition and a permanent fixture in our festive and social calendar. The club and the city will continue working to make sport an element of civic and universal construction. ●



# Adji and vê: Two games that teach for life

## Dakpè Sossou

Mayor of Lokossa (Benin)

**Lokossa, now known as the “City of Hope”, has been advancing for some years now along the decided line of revalorising and promoting its traditional games, mainly vê and adji. Those games have attracted much attention from the local authorities of Lokossa thanks to their role in the education of adolescents, in addition to the mere pleasure that they provide for players.**

Lokossa, a municipality with 77,065 inhabitants, is an open city that is on the move. For precisely that reason it has been known for some time now as the “City of Hope”. In spite of the modernisation that is sweeping all lands around the world, Lokossa still highly prizes its traditional values. This would explain the preservation of the games *adji* and *vê*, which today constitute essential spaces for the transmission of good manners and principles of citizenship for a better world.

It is not at all unusual in Lokossa at the weekend or sometimes during the week to see young and elderly people sitting under a tree or a grass roof on the public squares, partaking of these games, which, as more than simple pastimes, provide occasion for transmission of universal moral values for individuals’ self-improvement, but also, and above all, for the local development of the community.

These games are genuine vectors for development and expression of friendship between populations and they foster dialogue between the different generations and the breaking down of certain cultural barriers.

*Adji* dates back to very ancient times and is considered a game of strategy, like chess. It is played throughout Africa, as well as in Brazil. It is known by different names depending on the region, such as *adi*, *adita-ta*, *adji-boto* (for the Ewe in Ghana and Surinam), *awalé* (Ivory Coast), *awari*, *awélé* (Ivory Coast and Ghana), *ayo* or *ayo-ayo* (for the Yoruba in Nigeria), *ourin* or *ourri* (Cabo Verde), *oware* or *owaré* (for the Akan in Ghana), *wari* (Caribbean), and so on. In English it is often called *awari*. The game is played on a carved board with twelve pits, six per opponent. Each

player has four marbles per pit and the object is to capture the marbles in the opponent’s pits.

On the other hand, *vê* is known as the game of dexterity. As such, the object is to measure each player’s skill. Naturally, it is set up on two opposing sides, placed at a distance of four, five or six metres from each other, depending on the players’ ages, and consisting of an equal number of marbles (10, 12, 15 or more) arranged in a line, at regular intervals of 10 to 15 centimetres. The best player (i.e. the more skilful one) wins when he is able to hit all the other player’s marbles as quickly as possible.

It is important to note that in the outings organised after boys’ circumcision, *vê* is played to teach the “future man” qualities of dexterity.

The games of *adji* and *vê* are now the most treasured and safeguarded pastimes among the cultural and traditional heritage of the Lokossa municipality.

Since it requires quick mental calculation, *adji* obliges the players to be very good at mathematics. They need to count quickly the number of marbles that they have to win from one or another of their opponent’s pits and at the same time prepare to play in another pit if their opponent moves marbles to a given pit. The players’ mastery of the rules of equations, of addition and subtraction, provides them with the ability to parry their rival’s tactics.

Like *adji*, *vê* requires a sense of psychology and poise, presence of mind and the courage to make daring moves.

The players need to concentrate and especially maintain an objective view. After each successful play of a movement of marbles, there will be a round of gibes from all sides to amuse the onlookers, or jokes are told, or

stories of the exploits of ancestors such as the bravery of a grandparent during a hunt, and so on.

This opportune moment for the circulation of proverbs, adages and other metaphors to describe and make fun of the people and their lives can also foster citizen participation in local development. While one and another comment on the actions and initiatives of local authorities, from the most praiseworthy to the less edifying, commitment, patriotism and selfless conduct are taught.

In short, within the circles where the games of *adji* and *vê* are played, mutual respect is the rule, because here we learn not only the virtues of work well done, but also respect for our neighbours. The ability to remain calm, develop one's intellect, defend one's dignity, gain self-esteem and demonstrate modesty are further qualities linked to the practice of these games.

Given that circumstance, the City Council has decided to promote these games, which are enlisted as tools for development. Legislation on decentralisation in the Republic of Benin confers upon the local authority (the mayor) the prerogatives of judicious management of cultural heritage. Thus, article 102 of Law 97/029, on the organisation of municipalities within the Republic of Benin, provides that "the local community has, rather than the right, the duty of encouraging cultural, sports, youth and recreational activities by providing material and financial assistance to the structures and bodies responsible for such activities". That provision is further supported by the following article of the same law, which provides that "the Municipality will assure the preservation of the local cultural heritage".

Along those same lines, the ongoing efforts of UNESCO are aimed at having each people carefully preserve its original values in order to ensure a permanent wealth of cultures for a fruitful dialogue among communities.

Should we refer back here to the provisions of the Charter adopted by the International Association of Educating Cities? The intent of Section 2 on the Commitment of the City is clear where the first paragraph of Principle 7 provides that "The city must know how to discover, preserve and display its own complex identity. This will make it unique...". Further, Principle 10 provides that "The municipal administration must equip the city with spaces, facilities and public services that are suitable for the personal, social, moral and cultural development of all its inhabitants, paying special attention to children and youth."

To that end, the City Council has always included a budget item to support and encourage the promotion of the different matters provided for by law. Furthermore, within that framework a team of young players of *vê* this year represented the city at the National Games Championships held in June 2009 at Lokossa. In the end, the local team from Lokossa took second place. It is important to note that a competition is held each year for the best players of *adji*, drawing substantial crowds from all the districts and neighbourhoods of the city. In view of the success of this initiative, the City Council has made 13 February the official day of traditional games in Lokossa. Thus, starting on 13 February 2010, a number of teams from the different districts of Lokossa will face off, to celebrate the values of tradition and the wealth of the cultural heritage that we have safeguarded. ●



Young people and adults playing *Adji*



The Mayor of Lokossa, Mr. Sossou, playing *vê*



# The General State of Sports

## Nicole Dreyer

Deputy Mayor responsible for Early Childhood, Educational Actions and School Life;

## Serge Oehler

Deputy Mayor responsible for Sport,  
City of Strasbourg (France)

**Sports have become a social and cultural phenomenon of prime importance for people of all ages, particularly thanks to their educational value. In order to ascertain the expectations expressed by different groups in the area of sports and to allow the definition of a sports policy that is appropriate to the expectations of the general public and to real needs, the City of Strasbourg has undertaken a decided and participatory initiative: the General State of Sports. That consultation, which evidences a public wish to arrive at a collective definition of the city's sports policy, has been conceived around a variety of themes, taking into account especially the educational value of sports.**

Using a participatory democracy process, the City of Strasbourg, a municipality with a population of 276,063 inhabitants, has attempted to gather the opinions and suggestions of its citizens, associations, institutions and all those involved in sports in the city regarding the practice of sports.

Sports have become a social and cultural phenomenon of prime importance for people of all ages, particularly thanks to their educational value.

In order to ascertain the expectations expressed by different groups in the area of sports and to allow the definition of a sports policy that is appropriate to the expectations of the general public and to real needs, the City of Strasbourg has undertaken a decided and participatory initiative: the General State of Sports.

The consultation of the city's inhabitants by means of a questionnaire and individual interviews (in total 1,400 people have participated) and the organisation of 4 conference-debates on sports open to the general public have allowed the establishment of an overview of physical activity and the practice of sports in the city. The outcome of this diagnosis was presented to the largest possible number of attendees in the course of a morning session held to sum up the results. This diagnosis has likewise made

possible to work on guidelines and areas of action of the new sports policy that will be implemented through action programmes and operational projects.

That consultation, which evidences a public wish to arrive at a collective definition of the city's sports policy, has been conceived around a variety of themes, taking into account especially the educational value of sports.

The educational component of the municipal sports policy contributes to access to sports activities for all, with the aim of developing the benefits that can be gained through sports, such as social integration, health, wellbeing, and so on. In that regard, the areas where the Strasbourg city government will take action are mainly leisure and spare time, health and wellbeing, development of children and young people, prevention and social integration, as well as the contribution of sports to community life in the city.

Specifically, those actions take the form of different activities. During the school year, the initiatives of the City of Strasbourg are channelled through projects such as activity programmes at gymnasiums: 9,000 youths taking part in and benefiting from 195 hours weekly of scheduled activities in gymnasiums; actions within the framework of the Local Educational Agreement comprising 25 time slots weekly; entry for school groups to the Baggersee



lake (2,800 children yearly) to allow them to learn about physical activities outdoors; activities for senior citizens and handicapped people; swimming lessons for schoolchildren (17,000 children yearly), and introduction to skating (5,000 children yearly). During the summer, the programme entitled "Sports Passion" enlivens the different neighbourhoods of the city with multiple and varied sports activities in public parks, at swimming pools and on the streets. 25,000 people take part in the summer activities within the framework of the Sports Passion programme, showing citizens' interest in sports and physical activities.

By means of its Directorate of Sports, the City of Strasbourg contributes to fostering the practice of sports in the city and its different neighbourhoods. The Department of Sports and Physical Activity, forming part of the Active Life Service, assures all these actions. Thus, over thirty sports monitors take part in the development of the educational value of sports in the city of Strasbourg. Their actions aimed at all sectors of the public allow them to encourage people to take up sports at the individual, group and even family levels, by promoting meetings among different neighbourhoods, cultures and generations.

Their actions also take into account public health aims by making young people aware of the benefits of sports, the importance of nutrition and the dangers of risk-taking behaviours. They also take an active part in the integration of handicapped individuals. The programmes in place also contribute to school success and integration of children into their schools and neighbourhoods, for a better balance between school and extracurricular activities.

The City of Strasbourg also supports initiatives taken by local associations to promote the educational value of sports. In that regard, it can contribute financing and provide material assistance by allowing access to facilities or supplying a range of different logistic means to ensure that actions are accomplished without problems.

In conclusion, actions are taken in all the city's neighbourhoods and they are directed at young and elderly people, and at everyone regardless of any handicap. They concern both individuals and groups who practise sports.

This new policy is subject to ongoing evaluation. For that purpose an observatory of sports practices and physical activity has been established to ensure that supply keeps pace with demand. ●



# Montevideo, a Healthy City

## Gonzalo Halty

Director of Sport, City of Montevideo (Uruguay)

**Advocating for a policy of healthy cities obliges the authority undertaking this task to act decisively in all matters concerning the articulation of (public or private) assets and services in the territory, to improve the quality of life of the population.**

Having made a precise diagnosis, work commenced on designing this programme which seeks, in general terms, to devise a policy for undertaking simultaneous activities to act directly on the problematic situations detected. By way of example, 60.3% of the population did not participate in any kind of physical activity, and only 25% of those who did take some form of exercise were women; in turn, almost 50% of those who took exercise did so in communal spaces or public locations.

We are all aware of the importance of physical activity, sport and recreation in their own right. In the sphere of community work, experience has shown us that, as well as these intrinsic values, we are also dealing with conceptually complementary elements and innovative challenges leading to the autonomy of citizens with regard to their decision-making capacity; defining their priorities and those of the group; facing up to the issues affecting them, including the definition of certain problems and the way to overcome them; promoting self-confidence, fostering creativity and generating a general feeling of wellbeing.

Based on the mission of the Department of Physical Education, Sport and Recreation which requires that we create a Municipal Policy in these areas of responsibility, we have also drawn up three general objectives that underpin all our actions:

- a) To favour the drawing up of comprehensive development programmes.
- b) To strengthen the de-centralization process.
- c) To promote the creation and development of a democratizing policy for the arrangement, use and management of communal social property.

Regarding the programme, its objectives are:

- To build a network for actions based on the conceptual framework defined.

- To draw up projects together with the community.
- To create different healthy spaces in parks, squares and public areas of the city.
- To create plans and projects that complement the spaces created.
- To work in accordance with the principles of the Sporting Infrastructure Master Plan.

Based on an experience carried out in the summers of 2003 and 2004, involving the installation of two modules in the city's coastal boulevard, in which a multidisciplinary group worked intensely on the democratization of access to the different benefits offered by physical activity and sport, linking them necessarily to a project for a more participative and caring society.

At this stage we defined two types of undertakings:

- Working with the population already suffering some kind of health problem (obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes or asthma),
- Starting a strategy to implement and promote physical activity in green areas, cycle paths or communal spaces.

This initiative could not be ephemeral, so it had to include proposals with continuity over time and that, at the same time, could be reinvented and improved by the multiple agents involved.

As public policy administrators, we then set sufficient elements of credibility so that the actions devised would be part of a process of comprehensive development of the sports policy and the health of the target population.

What this strategy for executing actions with the community achieves is the benefit of the community, with the resulting and necessary adaptability to local conditions as relevant in line with the initiatives at neighbourhood level.

Finally, productivity and efficiency, so often mentioned, are also incorporated in the public processes, as a way





of showing responsibility when it comes to spending and investing public funds. We also try to influence the destination given to the corporate social responsibility budgets of private sector companies so that they are consist with the municipal policy.

#### Phase 1

- A study of the habits of the population was carried out jointly with the National Directorate for Sport and the National Statistical Institute.
- Working committees were established in co-ordination with the Pan-American Health Organization (PHO) with the participation of numerous public and private agents, from Ministries to private companies.
- Based on these conversations, the path to be followed was defined.

#### Phase 2

- We redirected the investment towards other parts of the city.
- We extended the social projection of the pedagogical proposal and obtained more funds through sponsors.
- The type of facilities necessary was defined for the installation of aerobic circuits, health tracks or fixed exercise stations in parks.
- The pertinent actions were co-ordinated to start up physical activities where there were ODH (obese, diabetic and hypertensive) groups.
- An asthma and physical activity action group was installed in an arrangement with the Hospital Pereira Rossell which provides care for children.
- We started commercial negotiations for business sponsorship (aerobic circuits, for example).
- Training courses were imparted to professionals in the public and private sectors.

#### Phase 3

- We raised awareness within the Municipality about this

matter through the strategy of the Sporting Infrastructure Master Plan.

- We increased the number of polyclinics covered from 2 to 8.
- The installation of the aerobic circuits and gymnastic or free sport facilities in the city's parks was authorized.
- We participated actively in the design of urban intervention strategies with the Urban Maintenance Section and the Comprehensive Plan on Irregular Settlements (PIAI).
- New cycle paths were installed in the city.

#### Phase 4

- In 2008 the Sporting Infrastructure Master Plan was launched and the Parks project was reinforced during the summer season.
- This is the year when the investments are budgeted and marketed through sponsors.
- Intensive work is carried out in the framework of the Participative Budget with the community.
- At the end of 2009 we are processing the data of a new survey of habits to compare the results with the data obtained in 2005.

#### Context of application of this project

Montevideo has a population of 1.3 million people, as the capital of the country, while the entire population of Uruguay is 3.3 million inhabitants.

A worsened socio-economic situation, as a result of the neo-liberal economic policies applied in the last 20 years have left a vast belt of poverty on the outskirts of the city, where a number of irregular settlements have grown up, leaving almost a third of the population under the poverty threshold after the crisis of 2002.

Based on this analysis, our services were aimed at de-concentrating actions, moving gradually away from the coast (the area with a better economic level and better services), striving to encompass the green areas of the city



and, at the same time, giving priority to the intervention in the suburban polyclinics.

### Assessment

With only six months to go before the end of the project, our assessment is as given below:

The following have been installed:

- A new aerobic circuit at Rodó park.
- A new physical exercise station at Batlle park.
- A new aerobic circuit at Prado park, where a fixed physical activity station will shortly be installed.
- 15 new basketball rings and backboards in parks and squares, in co-ordination with the Presidency of the Republic.
- Teaching service within 8 Municipal Polyclinics with private funding.
- Skateboard area in the Peñarol neighbourhood, a historic area being restored.

The following have been created:

- The Punta Yeguas public park (113 ha) in the west of the city where adventure sports, canoeing, triathlon and duathlon are promoted.

- The Andalucía park, with sports facilities, on the bank of the Miguelete river where formerly there was an irregular settlement.
- Three new cycle paths in the city.
- A focus group to deal with asthma in co-ordination with the Children's Hospital.
- A physical activity and sport comprehensive working group in the parks during the summer.
- The Líber Seregni park, with sports facilities, health track and skateboard area.
- In the context of the Participative Budget, the residents approved the decision that 42% of the projects be for investments aimed at improving communal sports facilities.
- In the context of creating the Sporting Infrastructure Master Plan, the concession of public spaces to sporting institutions was formalized, promoting the responsible use of the environment, careful use of energy and optimal use of the facilities granted.
- An indoor sports complex is being built at the north of the city (Gruta de Lourdes), in the context of the Comprehensive Plan on Irregular Settlements. ●

# Sport Inspires Me

## Pedro Peres

Coordinator of the Program, Sport Department of the City of Lisbon (Portugal)

**According to a social diagnosis an intervention is being put into practice in the city of Lisbon by the Department of Sport of the Municipality with the objective of promoting social inclusion through sport for children and the young at risk living in disadvantaged and problematic neighbourhoods strategically based on the development of a dynamic partnership with local public and non-governmental organizations.**

### Sport inspires multiple opportunities

We live in a time of great technological progress and scientific discoveries which prolongs life and increases performance. Nevertheless, this modern society has also contributed to accentuating social inequalities, and injustice is more and more a question of survival for the more vulnerable groups.

Exclusion takes then the shape of a multidimensional social phenomenon, leading to the fact that the non-participation of individuals means that they are obtaining only a minimum of the benefits that they are entitled to, as full members of society, as opposed to the concept of social integration (Capucha, 1998).

In the scope of this approach, and because of its unique







character, sport must play a fundamental role, as a vehicle of reference and a benchmark for positive values. Its added value, commonly recognized, is legitimated for example in the "White Paper on Sport", where, in addition to the strong contribution that sports activities offer, it also suggests that the EU member countries develop initiatives with the aim of promoting social inclusion through Sport.

Consequently, physical activity in general must represent a strong means for putting an end to prejudice and discrimination. Sport, in which diversity is an asset to be preserved and explored from a pedagogical perspective, could be a conduit for many opportunities and the freedom of expression, in order to put an end to the primacy of one culture over another (Arends, 1995).

This attitude means developing a process of equality and inclusion where people of different backgrounds, independently of their social status, sex, different capacities or any other quality, can feel comfortable about expressing their opinions and perspectives, and where they are able to do sport activities belonging to their own culture and other cultures (Houlihan, 2000; Kirk and Gorely, 2001).

According to this perspective, the Department of Sport of the Municipality of Lisbon developed a project named "Sport Inspires Me" - a local intervention that is being put into practice with the objective of promoting social inclusion through sport for children and the young at risk living in suburban slums.

### **The social context of underprivileged neighbourhoods**

With a surface area of 84.8 Km<sup>2</sup> and a population of

558,965 inhabitants (in 2001), Lisbon is the largest and the most densely populated city in Portugal (6,672.20 inhab./Km<sup>2</sup> in 2001). The resident population is 5.29% of the Portuguese population.

In the nineties, with the aim of clearing the slums, a Special Re-housing Program was created in the Lisbon and Oporto urban areas to provide the possibility for families (mainly foreigners and ethnic minorities from Portuguese speaking countries) living in slums to own their own homes at a very low cost.

Nevertheless, a large number of these action programs did not survive the economic interests deeply related to real estate speculation. This procedure led to a movement of people from their original locations to the urban suburbs where land was cheaper.

Moreover, social facilities, namely educational, sport or leisure facilities, were not built. This gave rise to discrimination and greater social exclusion. Too many problems were concentrated in areas already suffering from the stigma of the "bairro social", i.e., a neighbourhood for the underprivileged population, where the residents felt oppressed by poverty.

Nowadays, most of these neighbourhoods have all the characteristics of urban ghettos: an environment of violence, criminality, prostitution, traffic, addiction and juvenile delinquency. The feeling of social exclusion is reflected in violent and vandalic acts, clearly revealing a complete lack of a sense of belonging.

### **Sport as a vehicle for learning**

According to a social diagnosis, one of the most underprivileged and problematic neighbourhoods was chosen for strategic pilot actions of the project "Sport



Inspires Me". An intervention methodology was defined, based on the development of a dynamic partnership with local public and non-governmental organizations. Each partner agreed to select an expert to form part of a multi-disciplinary team. These technical experts have a great deal of experience in the field and knowledge of the community, specifically, children, youth and their families, and also of the existing social dynamics, which means that while they have the capacity for social intervention, they have no means to organise sports activities due to the lack of facilities and technical staff.

Finally, there were twenty-one technical experts involved in different activities: psychologists, teachers, monitors, and pre-school educators, among others, which lead to a multifaceted intervention, based on different knowledge areas.

For a start, it was decided that the municipal sport facilities would be made available for group activities so that a symbolic sport activity could be organised with all of the children and young people.

This was very important because of the new dynamic it provoked. In a later phase, there was a need to improve other conditions in order to foster sports activities. It was also necessary to find other partners in the sports area as well as physical education teachers to provide regular classes and well as the organisation of other regular sports activities for the youngest children.

This alliance shared resources, maximizing the performance of each organization by working together, always taking into account the added value generated by physical exercise and team work vis-à-vis social rehabilitation.

Sports activities shaped the course of these actions. The joint intervention invested heavily in the recreational-pedagogical aspect.

The interventions were divided along three main lines:

- *Regular sport activities:* in order to promote the participation of children and young people, already organized in groups by the participating entities, general physical education and dance activities were carried out, such as indoor soccer, skating, swimming, kickboxing, rugby, table tennis, hip-hop;
- *Education/Non-formal Education activities:* to build new positive references and to take advantage of the experts' influence on the neighbourhood. Certain activities for the training of local residents took place in order to include them in the development of regular sports activities for the community. Activities to increase parents' participation in their children's education were also carried out.
- *Citizenship activities:* without a pre-established schedule certain activities were carried out with the specific aim of creating a feeling of identity and belonging. In this sense, we organized group activities such as plastic arts workshops, reflection sessions to enable the participants to define the rules and, among others, several Sport Festivals were opened to the community to show the work that had been carried out and in order to promote a fair-play environment.

### Sport removing barriers

In a time when there have been huge social changes and there is a lack of positive references, in particular for youth, the project "Sport Inspires Me", aims to use



the potential for positive ideals implicit in sports, its troubleshooting capacity (Rubin, Fein & Vandenberg, 1983) and because, among other aspects, games work as cultural transmitters, where ideals and values are passed from generation to generation, from adult to child and from child to child (Sutton-Smith, 1979).

As a matter of fact, nowadays more than ever, we cannot ignore the added-value inherent in physical exercise for social rehabilitation. Consequently, and according to the technical staff monitoring and doing periodical evaluations, it was possible, for example, to organize activities with rival groups sharing the same space at the same time, in order to create an identity and a feeling of belonging among the most underprivileged communities by fostering the development of new personal and social skills, supported by a fair-play environment.

Where so many other programs had failed, the problems of exclusion were confronted head on through an experimental project organized in one of Lisbon's most violent neighborhoods. The highly positive results led to the application of the same methodology in several other city neighbourhoods, with the concomitant adaptations based on their specific social contexts.

The project "Sports Inspires Me" tries to comply with the constitutional right of all citizens to do sports and the

simple fact of including all social strata, cultures, ages and individuals both male and female, in the same activities, in the same social environment, has diminished social tensions, broken down barriers and eradicate dangerous forms of behavior. ●

### Bibliography

- ARENDS, R. (1995). *Aprender a ensinar*. Lisboa: McGraw-Hill
- CAPUCHA, M. A. (1998). *Pobreza, Exclusão Social e Marginalidades*. Oeiras: Celta Editora;
- CAPUL, M. and LEMAY, M. (2003). *Da Educação à Intervenção Social*. Porto: Porto Editora;
- CLAVEL, G. (2004). *A Sociedade da Exclusão - Compreendê-la para dela sair*. Porto: Porto Editora;
- COELHO, O. (2004). *Pedagogia do Desporto*. Lisboa: Livros Horizonte;
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2007). *White Paper on Sport*. Brussels;
- HOULIHAN, B.M. (2001). *Citizenship, civil society and the sport and recreation profession*, *Managing Leisure*, 1-14;
- HOULIHAN, B.M. (2000). *Sporting excellence, schools and sports development: The politics of crowded policy spaces*", *European Physical Education Review*, 62, 171-194;
- RUBIN K., FEIN G., and VANDENBERG, B. (1983). *Play*. In P.H. Mussen (ed.) *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Vol. 4. New York: John Wiley and Sons;
- SUTTON-SMITH, B. (1979). *Play and Learning*. New York: Gardner Press.



**International Association of  
Educating Cities  
(IAEC)**

C/Avinyó 15, 4th floor  
08002 Barcelona (Spain)

**Coordination:**

Juli Pernas López, Director of  
la Fundació Barcelona Olímpica

**Technical Coordination:**

M<sup>a</sup> Ángeles Cabeza Santano,  
IAEC Secretariat;  
Javier Lasunción, Fundació  
Barcelona Olímpica

**Translations:**

Tau traduccions

**Style revision and  
corrections:**

IAEC Secretariat  
Michael Tregebov

© **Published by:**

IAEC

© **Interviews and articles:**

The authors

© **Photographs:**

Cover:  
City of San Sebastian

Interview with Sergio  
Chiamparino:  
City of Turin

Interview with Steven N.  
Blair:  
City of Guadalajara,  
General Direction of Education;  
City of Loures;  
City of San Sebastian;  
Institut Barcelona Esports

Interview with Christina  
Ramberg:  
City of Gothenburg

Interview with Johann Olav  
Koss:  
Right To Play

Article by Paul De Knop and  
Marc Theeboom:  
Marc Theeboom

Article by Gertrud  
Pfister:  
Adriana Machado;  
City of Strasbourg;  
Fotoquelle: LaufReport.de;  
Right To Play

Article by Enrique Rovira-  
Beleta:  
Institut Barcelona Esports;  
Rovira-Beleta Accesibilidad SLP;  
Special Olympics Catalunya

Experiences:  
City of Granollers;  
City of Lisbon;  
City of Lokossa;  
City of Mexico;  
City of Montevideo;  
City of Strasbourg;  
Right To Play.

**Layout and printing by:**

Image and Editorial  
Productions,  
City of Barcelona

**Date of publication:**

April 2010

**Copyright deposit:**

B-18.019-2009

**ISSN:**

2013-4053



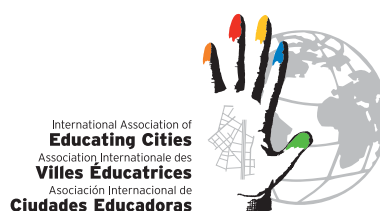
**Diputació  
Barcelona**



**Ajuntament de Barcelona**



**Fundació Barcelona Olímpica**



Avinyó, 15 - 4<sup>a</sup> planta - 08002 Barcelona  
Tel: +34 93 342 77 20 - Fax: +34 93 342 77 29  
edcities@bcn.cat  
[www.edcities.org](http://www.edcities.org)

International Association of  
**Educating Cities**  
Association Internationale des  
**Villes Educatrices**  
Asociación Internacional de  
**Ciudades Educadoras**



“...The Games were an event that was really part of our lives and I think that the meaning of “Educating city” was present in the organization and celebration of the Olympics. Moreover, beside the organization of the event, we invested in order to create new structures and programmes aimed at supporting sport for all ages and at promoting the values and awareness of sport.”

Sergio Chiamparino, Mayor of Turin