



SPORTS AS A WEAPON FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT :

An activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment. "Sport" comes from the Old French de sport meaning "leisure", with the oldest definition in English from around 1300 being "anything humans find amusing or entertaining". Other meanings include gambling and events staged for the purpose of gambling; hunting; and games and diversions, including ones that require exercise. Roget's defines the noun sport as an "activity engaged in for relaxation and amusement" with synonyms including diversion and recreation.



KEYWORDS : *physical exertion and skill , physical and social skills.*

INTRODUCTION

The participation in organized sports offers the chance for youth people to enhance their physical and social skills. Sports and games are the ways of enhancing the mental and physical growth. Sports help in character building and provide energy and strength. A healthy diet and an active lifestyle will bring good results in their lifestyle, minds and bodies. The recreational activities eliminate the unhealthy habits that may lead them to diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease, joint pain, strokes and other serious diseases. Sports develop a sense of friendliness among the people and develop their team spirit. They help them to develop their mental and physical toughness.

SPORTS AND HEALTH

During recent decades, there has been a progressive decline in the level of physical activity in people's daily lives in developed countries. For a majority of people, little physical effort is involved any more in their work, domestic chores, transportation and leisure. Whilst specific health risks differ between countries and regions, the fact remains that physical inactivity is a major risk factor for most common non-communicable diseases and physical activity can counteract many of the ill effects of inactivity.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that, with the exception of sub-Saharan Africa, chronic diseases are now the leading causes of death in the world. The WHO cites four non-communicable diseases that make the largest contribution to mortality in low- and middle-income countries, namely: cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, and diabetes.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH

Sport and physical activity has long been used as a tool to improve mental, physical and social well-being. Physical inactivity is a major risk factor associated with a large number of lifestyle diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. Sport projects that specifically focus on health outcomes generally emphasise:

- The promotion of healthy lifestyle choices among children and young people as well as adults to combat inactivity;
- The use of sport as a tool to raise awareness on communicable diseases in developing countries, for example, through district or national health campaigns supported by athletes and sports competitions;
- The use of sport as a didactical tool to communicate vital health-related information to 'at risk' groups;
- The use of sport to mobilise hard-to-reach groups as part of large-scale health campaigns, including for example, communities with low population density;
- Sport is considered to contribute to achieving mental health objectives, including addressing depression and stress-related disorders.

Sport further builds human capabilities by increasing knowledge and contributing to education. Incorporating physical education into the school curriculum and providing opportunities for recreation improve a child's ability to learn, with evidence indicating that it also increases attendance and overall achievement. Sport also educates people about the body, raising awareness and respect for their bodies and those of others, critical for healthy living and the prevention of diseases, like HIV/AIDS. Similarly, participation in outdoor sports raises awareness and respect for the environment, teaching people about the importance of a clean and healthy environment. Sport is also a key component of social life, directly engaging communities. It brings people together in a fun and participatory way. It helps create social relationships, build connections and improve communication between individuals and groups. Sport also mobilizes volunteers and promotes active community involvement, helping to build social capital and strengthen the social fabric.

The potential of sport as a tool for development and peace has yet to be fully realized. The use of sport remains outside the mainstream of thinking among United Nations agencies. While sport and play are repeatedly acknowledged as a human right, they are not always seen as a priority and have even been called the "forgotten right". Sport is seen as a by-product of development, not as an engine.

The Scope of Sport

The concept of "sport for all" is central to this understanding of sport. "Sport for all" initiatives aim to maximize access to and participation in appropriate forms of physical activity. Emphasis is placed on participation and the inclusion of all groups in society, regardless of gender, age, ability or race. Given the Task Force's emphasis on "sport for all", elite competitive sport generally lies outside the scope of this report, although at times references are made to it. The aim of United Nations activities involving sport is not the creation of new sporting champions and the development of sport but rather the use of sport in broader development and peace-building activities. While in some instances such activities may lead to the development of sport, the primary desired outcome is to contribute to overall development via sport-related projects.

Sport, however, is a reflection of society. It should be acknowledged that sport, like many aspects of society, simultaneously encompasses some of the worst human traits, including violence, corruption, discrimination, hooliganism, excessive nationalism, cheating and drug abuse. However, these negative aspects of sport by no means outweigh its potential positive benefits.

SPORTS AND PEACE

The potential links between sport and peace are also powerful. From international events to the grass roots, sport brings people together in a way that can cross boundaries and break down barriers, making the playing field a simple and often apolitical site for initiating contact between antagonistic

groups. Consequently, sport can be an ideal forum for resuming social dialogue and bridging divides, highlighting the similarities between people and breaking down prejudice. The popularity of sport and its convening power further contribute to sport being a powerful voice for communicating messages of peace and a site for symbolic public acts on the global and local levels. Sport is an effective element in community-based initiatives that aim to create sustainable peace. The skills and values learned through sport are many of the same skills and values taught in peace education to resolve and prevent conflict and create conditions conducive to peace, from the interpersonal to the international. Well-crafted sports activities teach respect, honesty, communication, cooperation, empathy, and how and why to adhere to rules. Sport is a powerful way to communicate these values, especially to young people, in a way that is fun and participatory. For refugees, displaced persons, orphans and former child soldiers, sport offers a sense of normality providing structure in destabilizing environments, and serves as a means to channel energies positively.

Sport is an international language. Its ability to cross cultures enables sport-related programmes to bridge social and ethnic divides. As a result, sport can be a powerful tool to promote peace, both symbolically on the global level and very practically within communities. The power of sport can be used as a tool for preventing conflict as well as an element for building sustainable peace. When applied effectively, sports programmes promote social integration and foster tolerance. These core values are the same as those necessary for lasting peace. In post-conflict environments in particular, this can work to reduce tensions and generate dialogue.

CONCLUSION

By promoting sport in a strategic, systematic and coherent way, the potential of sport as a tool for development and peace can be realized. When sport is used as an instrument for development and peace it must be implemented in a way that is equity-driven and culturally relevant. Sports programmes must be based upon the "sport for all" model, ensuring that all groups are given the opportunity to participate, particularly those who gain additional benefits such as women, persons with disabilities and young people. Sports programmes must also be designed explicitly to draw out the core skills and values that can be learned through sport. When the positive aspects of sport are maximized, it is a powerful and cost-effective way of supporting a range of development and peace objectives.

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