



SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE:

From Practice to Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sport and physical activity are rapidly gaining recognition as simple, low-cost, and effective means of achieving development goals. Over the past decade, UN agencies, international sport federations, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and grassroots organizations have been using sport as a tool for development and peace. These efforts led the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace to conclude in 2003 that, in addition to sport's inherent benefits, well-designed sport-based initiatives incorporating the best values of sport can be powerful, practical, and cost-effective tools to achieve development and peace objectives. Sport in this context is defined as "all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organized or competitive sport, and indigenous sports and games."¹

Well-designed sport and physical activity programs are powerful tools for fostering healthy child and individual development, teaching positive values and life skills, strengthening education, preventing disease (particularly HIV/AIDS) and improving health and well-being. These programs can help empower and promote the inclusion of marginalized groups, especially women, migrants, and people with disabilities. Further, sport and physical activity programs can assist in preventing and reducing conflict, increasing social cohesion, and contributing to community economic development. Sport's unparalleled popularity and reach also make it a highly effective communication and social mobilization tool.

Scale and success in harnessing the power of Sport for Development and Peace internationally depend on engaging and mobilizing national governments, as these drive national and international development strategies and investment. The Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG) was created in 2004 to engage and work with national governments on policy recommendations to support the integration of sport and physical activity into their national and international development strategies and programs.² Countries in the north and south differ widely in the nature and development of both their sport systems and their current use of sport for development and peace objectives. However, experience has shown that there are many points along this continuum where Sport for Development and Peace can be successfully introduced, even where there is no sport system or infrastructure in place.

This report explores the diverse approaches of a cross-section of countries to learn what is working, the challenges that remain to be addressed, and how national governments can broaden the current dialogue to both strengthen current initiatives and encourage more countries to harness and integrate the tremendous power of sport into broader national

¹ Sport for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals, UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (2003) at 2.

² The SDP IWG includes representatives of national governments, UN agencies, and international non-governmental organizations and sport federations. Its mandate extends to 2008, when it will present its final report and policy recommendations at the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing.

development and peace strategies. To this end, the Secretariat reviewed available English-language policy and program information and interviewed leading government proponents of Sport for Development and Peace from 13 developing and developed countries.³ While much work remains to be done, the information, insights, and advice obtained through these interviews are an invaluable resource and will be used to inform the work of the SDP IWG as it moves toward the delivery of its final report and policy recommendations in Beijing in 2008.

Key Findings:

- **Positioning sport as a tool for development.** To engage governments, sport should not be positioned as an end in itself, but rather as a low-cost, high-impact tool to achieve broader development aims, in particular the Millennium Development Goals.
- **Building government support** is contingent on the existence of a Sport for Development and Peace focal point within government, policy evidence, strong champions, and effective outreach across governments and to external sport and development partners.
- **Sport federations and development NGOs play an essential role** in advocating for and delivering Sport for Development and Peace programs. Governments need to engage these civil society organizations as policy and delivery partners, and challenge them to become more engaged in Sport for Development and Peace efforts.
- **Strengthening the current evidence base.** Efforts must be made to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of programs, to increase the current evidence base, and to enhance international and cross-sectoral coordination at the field and policy levels.
- **Donor countries are firmly focused on the need to build local and national capacity and ownership** to ensure good-quality, high-impact, sustainable programs, and to foster greater support among developing countries. These face particular challenges due to competing development priorities and resource constraints that need to be explored more deeply and addressed in the SDP IWG's future work.
- **There is strong momentum among developing countries** in favour of Sport for Development and Peace. A number of countries have national policies already in place or underway, and there are several examples of successful large-scale programs.
- **Regional outreach.** Developing nations have been among the first to make use of broader regional organizations to raise the issue of Sport for Development and Peace and to invite their peers to consider its potential to contribute to their own national development strategies. This has elicited a strong positive response and promises to be an excellent mechanism for engaging more countries in the ongoing Sport for Development and Peace dialogue.
- **Engaging multilateral institutions.** Government leadership needs to be accompanied by outreach to multilateral institutions not yet involved, to raise their awareness of the value of Sport for Development and Peace and to encourage its integration into their policies and strategies.

³ The countries surveyed were: Azerbaijan, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Ghana, the Netherlands, Norway, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Tanzania, the United Kingdom, and Zambia.