

Promoting Youth Empowerment, Social Cohesion and Gender Equality through Sports

Project name	Global Programme Sport for Development, hub for Latin America based in Colombia
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany
Political partner	Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC) of Colombia
Technical partner	Ministry of Sport, Colombia
Current phase	October 2022 - September 2025



Context

For decades, the Colombian population has suffered the consequences of violence, armed conflict, and territorial disputes by illegal groups, resulting in more than eight million victims.

This situation is further exacerbated by the climate crisis, the lingering effects of the pandemic, and the continuous rise in migration and displacement. In many areas, children and young people are especially vulnerable.

In 2023, it was estimated that 25% of Colombia's population are young people between the ages of 14 and 28, equivalent to 14.3 million individuals. Youth are disproportionately impacted by structural challenges such as poverty and limited access to basic rights, including education, healthcare, and employment. These conditions are mirrored in many Latin American countries.

The complexity of these contexts demands innovative responses. Sport offers a unique opportunity to engage youth and foster the development of life skills and soft skills. It can empower young people and unlock their potential as essential and creative contributors to community development in the region.

Sport can also serve as a powerful tool for social change and peacebuilding. It is not only innovative and versatile but also cost-effective. Furthermore, the positive impacts of sport have been scientifically validated.

The 'Sport for Development' Approach

Since 2014, German development cooperation has been using the 'Sport for Development' (S4D) approach in Colombia as a tool to foster learning and transformation processes in a playful and engaging way, benefiting both individual children and young people as well as society as a whole.

In collaboration with its partners, German development cooperation developed the 'Sport with Principles' ('Deporte con Principios') approach, tailored to the realities and needs of the Colombian population. This approach, along with the Colombian experience, has inspired other countries in the region to adopt and adapt its implementation at various levels.

Current Project Phase (2022-2025)

The 'Global Programme Sport for Development' promotes the networking of stakeholders across various countries worldwide, with two regional hubs in Latin America and the Western Balkans, as well as in Pakistan and Tunisia. The '[Global S4D Community](#)' serves as a virtual platform where learners and experts can further develop their skills and exchange experiences at both regional and global levels.

Through the training of stakeholders in the field, the programme supports the individual, collective and operational capacities of organisations and local groups in implementing the 'Sport for Development' approach.



From left to right:
1) International Expert Training (IET) in Santiago de Chile
2) S4D Youth Ambassadors
3) Sport for Development at the international conference MINEPS 7

Learning, positioning, and anchoring of S4D in the Latin American region

From Colombia, the 'Global Programme Sport for Development' works regionally across Latin America. The goal is to support international, regional, and local actors in implementing Sport for Development activities aimed at strengthening marginalised groups in society. The activities are designed to foster social cohesion, inclusion of people with disabilities and gender equality. The programme's work encompasses the following areas:

- Capacity building at various levels: providing advice to high-level bodies and decision-makers on technical, political, and methodological issues.
- Developing of regional indicators to measure the impact of sport.
- Empowering 24 'Sport for Development Youth Ambassadors' from six different countries in the region and strengthen them as local agents of change.
- Ensuring the sustainable anchoring of Sport for Development into partner structures through political and methodological advice, as well as capacity building.
- Implementing joint initiatives with various international and German partners from the sports sector.

Selected partner organisations

In the current project phase, the regional hub in Colombia is collaborating with the following partners:

- Ministry of Sports (Mindeporte) of Colombia
- The Delegation of the European Union in Colombia
- Ministries and higher bodies of sports in Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, among others.
- The Ibero-American and South American Sports Councils

- International Olympic Committee
- Paralympic Committee of the Americas (APC)
- UNESCO
- Municipalities / education secretariats and departmental and local governments

Achievements since 2014

- 2,467 people from countries in the region have been trained in the 'Sport with Principles' method and have innovative tools to contribute to the development of their communities.
- The coaches reached more than 138,000 children and young people (2024).
- Application of the 'Deporte con Principios' methodology in Colombian government programmes ('Paz en movimiento') and NGOs (Grupo Internacional de Paz) for peacebuilding.
- Establishment of a network of 'Sport for Development Youth Ambassadors' in Latin America, consisting of 24 young people dedicated to driving social change and using sport as a tool for this purpose.
- Exchange of knowledge and development of practical tools, such as the first International Experts Training in Latin America or the gender-based violence prevention tool focused on guaranteeing human rights and social inclusion through sports (in collaboration with CONSUDE).
- Co-organisation of the First Americas Forum on Inclusion Through Sport at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games (with APC and partner countries).
- Since 2022, the share of women participating in the activities has increased to 25%.

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