



Implementing development goals: Sport for violence prevention

1. Sport for Development

One of the goals of German development policy is to harness the power of sport and exercise more effectively in international development cooperation activities. The aim is to create opportunities for personal development for people of all ages and to strengthen social cohesion.

Sport activities with a social and educational component can raise awareness in a wide range of areas – not only among the children and young people taking part, but also among coaching staff. These areas include education, health, peace and the environment as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender and inclusion. By creating structured opportunities for participation, activities in the field of sport can also help to strengthen civil society; a further priority area in German development cooperation.

When used in a targeted way, sport can play an important role above and beyond the development of physical skills. It can promote the transfer of learning and can be used as an instrument of education. It can contribute to preventing HIV/ Aids and violence and has a positive impact on the physical and mental well-being of children and young people in general. And finally, it

provides participants with the opportunity to learn life skills that will help them overcome difficult situations in their everyday lives and improve their prospects for the future.

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) commissioned the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH with the implementation of the sector programme ‘Sport for Development’ with the aim of making a significant contribution in this area and developing effective ways of using sport in German development cooperation activities.

In a total of five country components across three continents, approaches and methods have been tested and further developed together with the project’s partners. The ‘Sport for Development’

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



5 GENDER EQUALITY



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



approach is also being implemented in two new regional projects.

The United Nations (UN) outcome document ‘Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ highlights the important role sport has to play in enabling sustainable development and emphasises the contribution it can make to development, peace, health, education and social inclusion.

The promotion of sport for violence prevention and conflict transformation contributes directly to the achievement of SDG 16 ‘Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.’ This calls for the provision of a safe environment for sports activities, for coaches to convey positive values such as respect, tolerance and fair play, and for all actors and organisations to lead by example and encourage a ‘culture of peace.’ Activities in this field also contribute directly to gender equality and SDG 5, specifically the elimination of ‘all forms of violence against all women and girls.’

This paper gives practitioners and theorists from the field of development cooperation an overview of the ways in which sport can be used to promote violence prevention. It presents approaches, priorities, practical experience, results and examples of projects. The sector programme on ‘Sport for Development’ also offers additional materials and advice on mainstreaming the approach in projects with a focus on violent prevention and on the use of sport as an instrument in other sectors.

2. Background

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), youth violence is the most visible form of violence outside conflict regions and is a growing problem in many countries. Every day, an average of 685 young people between the ages of 10 and 29 die as a result of violent crime. Youth violence is male-dominated, takes place in public spaces and is usually perpetrated by groups. Violence is the second most common cause of death among young men. Homicide rates are highest in Central and South America.

Good coaches, safe sports grounds and high-quality sports programmes are the best and most cost-effective way of preventing youth violence.

Psychological violence and bullying are also very common among young people. According to a WHO study of 40 developing countries, 42 percent of boys and 37 percent of girls have experienced this type of violence. Experiences of physical and sexual violence are especially common among girls and women. UN Women estimates that one in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence – usually by their partner.

High levels of youth unemployment, inadequate employment opportunities and a lack of formal and informal education courses mean that young people have little opportunity for social advancement. Exposure to violence in both the public and private sphere has a normalising effect, leading people to believe that violence is an acceptable way of dealing with conflict and





frustration. In these situations, young people looking for a way out, often join youth gangs or get involved in organised crime.

Overall, according to the WHO a high level of violence has a significant negative impact on the economic, social and political levels.

Sport can play a supporting role in this context. It can help to prevent violence, reduce tension and mitigate conflict by providing a neutral and peaceful space in which to engage with others. Even target groups that are difficult to reach, such as former perpetrators, can be re-integrated into society through sport. Sport also helps victims of violence to work through traumatic situations and rebuild their self-confidence.

Young people's acceptance of violence as a

Through sport, children and young people learn how to settle conflicts peacefully and acquire the social skills they need to solve problems without resorting to violence.

means of settling conflict decreases with participation in activities supported by 'Sport for Development'. They learn to recognise positive values such as respect, tolerance and non-vi-

olent communication, and develop a greater sense of self-worth.

3. Approaches and priority areas

When used in the right way, sport can help to prevent violence and resolve conflict in a peaceful manner at the individual, personal, community and societal levels.

- Well-trained coaches who focus on conveying social values and life skills can teach children and young people important skills, such as self-control, fairness and tolerance. They can also teach them how to deal with victory, defeat and different points of view. In addition, children and young people become more used to communicating with others in a respectful and non-violent way and thus learn how to solve conflicts peacefully and problems without resorting to violence.

- For high-risk target groups such as children and young people facing poverty and violence, sport can help to reduce aggression and provide appropriate leisure time opportunities. Sport can also 'open doors' by bringing children and young people who would otherwise be difficult to reach into contact with additional relevant

Colombia

Peace building and violence prevention through sport

Colombia endured more than 50 years of civil conflict between guerrilla organisations, paramilitary groups and the Colombian army. This conflict left more than 14 percent of the population internally displaced. It has affected almost eight million people, including a disproportionately high number of children and young people. The predisposition for violence among these young people is much higher than in other age groups and they are also exposed to violence much more frequently. The conclusion of the peace agreement with the FARC guerrilla group at the end of 2016 and the implementation of this agreement with a clear focus on supporting the regions affected by the conflict, is an important step in the country's development. The sector programme on 'Sport for Development' is building on the government's efforts. Its work focuses on peace building, violence prevention, reconciliation, social integration of internally displaced persons and, in the context of the current peace process, the integration of former participants in the armed conflict.

The sector programme has worked with Colombian partners to develop the 'Fútbol con Principios' ('Football with Principles')



method which aims to teach children and young people social skills and values such as respect and team spirit through football. The method builds on existing Colombian strategies for promoting peace through football, international 'Sport for Development' approaches, modern sports education methods and insights from the field of youth psychology. The programme's three-stage training courses for coaches, teachers and social workers, which take place over the course of several weeks, help to change the behaviour of children and young people for the better. Around 500 people have taken part in training thus far and have reached an estimated 35,000 children and young people.



Colombian coach Marcos Silva, who works with young people in prison using the 'Fútbol con Principios' method, has seen for himself how successful the training measures can be: 'This method encourages young people to value themselves. They develop a better sense of empathy, responsibility, mutual respect and tolerance. And I am sure that the majority now resort to physical and verbal violence less often.'

social and youth welfare services and facilitating integration.

- The integration of sport-programmes into a holistic concept for violence prevention enables sports organisations, coaches and participants to establish a positive relationship with institutions such as the police, youth welfare services, schools and other local actors.

Sport helps people to build strong relationships, both as individuals and as groups – and this prevents violent confrontations and conflicts.

- Sport helps people to build strong relationships, both as individuals and as groups. In fragmented societies and post-conflict situations in particular, sport can help to reduce prejudice against other social groups, foster social cohesion and prevent conflict and violent confrontations.
- Sport can help to re-integrate former perpetrators of violence, participants in war and groups involved in armed conflict back into society. Sport offers them new prospects, strengthens social skills, reduces aggression and therefore prevents perpetrators from falling back into old habits.
- Victims of violence and conflict endure life-long physical and emotional suffering – and can ultimately become perpetrators themselves. Sport can help those affected to cope with traumatic experiences, provide a distraction and positive experiences and build self-worth and confidence.
- Sport can be used to raise awareness on the



issue of violence against women among boys and men and practise respectful ways of dealing with the opposite sex.

- Sport builds self-confidence in girls and young women and can offer them a safe space free from violence.

4. Lessons learned and results achieved

Sport does not always serve to prevent violence and conflict. The violence perpetrated by football fans and the rivalry between different groups on the sports field are just two examples of how sport can, in some cases, even intensify conflict. It is therefore particularly important to train coaches, enabling them to make the most of their position as role models, and to focus not only on the competitive aspect of sport but on the social values and skills. In German development cooperation as a whole and especially in (post-) conflict situations and when working with (violent) offenders, a conflict-sensitive approach in line with the do-no-harm principle is essential. Often partner organisations must also be made aware of these issues and principles if sport is to play a role in preventing violence.

The regional programme on 'Sport for Development in Africa' (S4DA) has had considerable success training mediation coaches in a refugee context in Kenya. Kakuma refugee camp provides shelter for refugees from different ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds, and conflicts can quickly erupt, especially among young people. Mediation coaches use sports activities such as volleyball and football to encourage young people to resolve conflicts without re-



Brazil

Violence prevention through football

Life for young people in socially disadvantaged areas of Brazilian cities is still characterised by limited education and employment opportunities, poor living conditions, gang and drug-related crime and sexual exploitation. This situation has worsened by the political and economic crisis of the last two years. At the same time, sport – and football in particular – is extremely important in Brazil and incredibly popular with children and young people. Football therefore offers an opportunity to reach and have a positive impact on a broad section of the population and thus to advance development processes. Working with Brazilian partners, German development cooperation developed the ‘Treino Social’ method. This approach incorporates elements of sports education – such as the development of social skills and the discussion of issues such as gender, the environment, health and conflict prevention – into football coaching of a high technical standard. Children improve their football skills while at the same time building their self-confidence, learning to respect others and developing an understanding of social issues.



Many partner organisations apply the method in socially disadvantaged areas and poor residential areas with the aim of preventing violence locally and reducing violence and crime in Brazil as a whole.

The partner organisation Promundo, based in Rio de Janeiro, uses the ‘Treino Social’ method in its work with 14 to 18-year-old girls in a youth detention centre. Marcos Antonio Salustiano, a coach who regularly uses the method with 50 girls in the centre, is seeing positive results: ‘At the start of the project, you could feel the tension in the air.



Disagreements, arguments and conflicts were a daily occurrence, it was virtually impossible to keep the group focused on the activities we were doing and participants frequently refused to take part. That has changed now. The girls are able to concentrate on the task at hand, actively participate in activities, and support and help each other.’ Project coordinator Norma Sá is also convinced by the method: ‘It enables girls to assert themselves without resorting to violence.’



sorting to violence. In the ‘Youth Development through Football’ (YDF) project, which was implemented in South Africa and nine other African countries from 2007 to 2014, the YDF Manual for Violence Prevention was developed to complement training for coaches in the area of football and life skills. In this complementary training, coaches learned how and in which contexts violence can arise, how to handle conflict situations and how to use football to interact with victims and risk groups. Another important aspect of the training was encouraging coaches to recognise their own boundaries and establish a support network, consisting of organisations from social work, medical staff or police officers. Monitoring activities by the University of Johannesburg found that the violent behaviour of young men, who participated in

the programme, fell by 35 percent after one year. In Mindanao, the ‘Sports for Peace’ approach was used to good effect in a conflict prevention programme. As well as providing training for coaches and focusing on positive values and social skills in sports programmes, emphasis was placed on using sports events and tournaments as a means of preventing conflict and promoting peaceful coexistence. These project examples show that sport can be used in a wide variety of ways to prevent violence and resolve conflict.

For further information and advice, please do not hesitate to contact us!

***E-Mail: sport-for-development@giz.de
Website: www.giz.de/sport-for-development***



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Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 36+40
53113 Bonn, Germany
T +49 228 4460-0
F +49 228 4460-1766

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5
65760 Eschborn, Germany
T +49 61 96 79-0
F +49 61 96 79-11 15

Contact:

Sector programme 'sport for development'
sport-for-development@giz.de

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