

SPORT AS A TOOL FOR PEACE BUILDING

Objective

Sport appeals to the most varied groups of the population and is usually associated with affirmative values. It is beneficial to health, stimulating and integrating. If its potential is to unfold, the desired, positive effect must be selectively furthered. The purpose of this Tip Sheet is to show how sport can be used as a valuable and effective instrument within the context of natural disasters, development cooperation and peace building.

In most of the threshold and developing countries, the number of children who have not attended school, or who have attended school for only a few years, and the number of unemployed adolescents are immense. One of the consequences is violence in the socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods and village communities. The question arises as to how the largest number of children and adolescents can

be reached with financial means that are modest. Sport can serve as an instrument to provide access for these socially disadvantaged children and adolescents to pedagogically supervised fields of experience in which not only the pleasure and enjoyment of exercise and games are conveyed but also humanitarian and social values.

Target groups

This Tip Sheet is intended for those persons responsible in the SDC, in headquarters and in the coordination offices as well as for partner organisations which are active in the areas of development, humanitarian aid and peace building. The information and suggestions may also prove helpful for staff members of embassies and non-governmental organisations.

Key messages

- Sport is a rapidly implemented and cost-effective measure. It enables the civil population – especially children and adolescents – to have a realm for experiencing carefree, happy moments and thus to regain a bit of normality.
- Sport is an ideal door opener in many areas: be it for making contacts, for imparting values, for initiating or integrating psycho-social activities, or as an instrument for mediating between conflicting parties.
- Sport offers an ideal platform for encouraging a culture of peaceful encounter.
- Sport is flexible and can be adapted to the specific context.
- The positive potential of sport, and the added value associated with it, must be explicitly supported and specifically used if its effectiveness is to develop. Sport is like a musical instrument on which the player determines the melody.

1. INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters, war, conflicts, and precarious political conditions always strike individuals. If death, injury and the loss of the material basis of existence are marking everyday life, there is a shattering psychological effect for those involved. Traumatic experiences, misery and deprivation are always paralysing and result in a feeling of helplessness. In a context that is characterised by the loss of perspectives and hope, above all in post-conflict situations, resignation and apathy or rage and the willingness to resort to violence are comprehensible strategies for coping with everyday life. It is not only a matter of providing basic needs but of creating a climate for a life that is more agreeable and worth living. Sport can play a role on many levels because it literally brings movement into an atmosphere of tension and rigidity.

Sport moves individuals

Sport has an enormous potential. If this potential is used explicitly under pedagogic guidance, it can serve not only to build up athletic skills and success, but also to acquire the ability to develop one's personality and social competence.

Sport moves communities

Athletic events offer a straightforward occasion for meeting others. Communities that face each other with mistrust have a chance to experience something in common at such events.

2. AN UNDERSTANDING FOR SPORT – WHICH SPORT IS NEEDED?

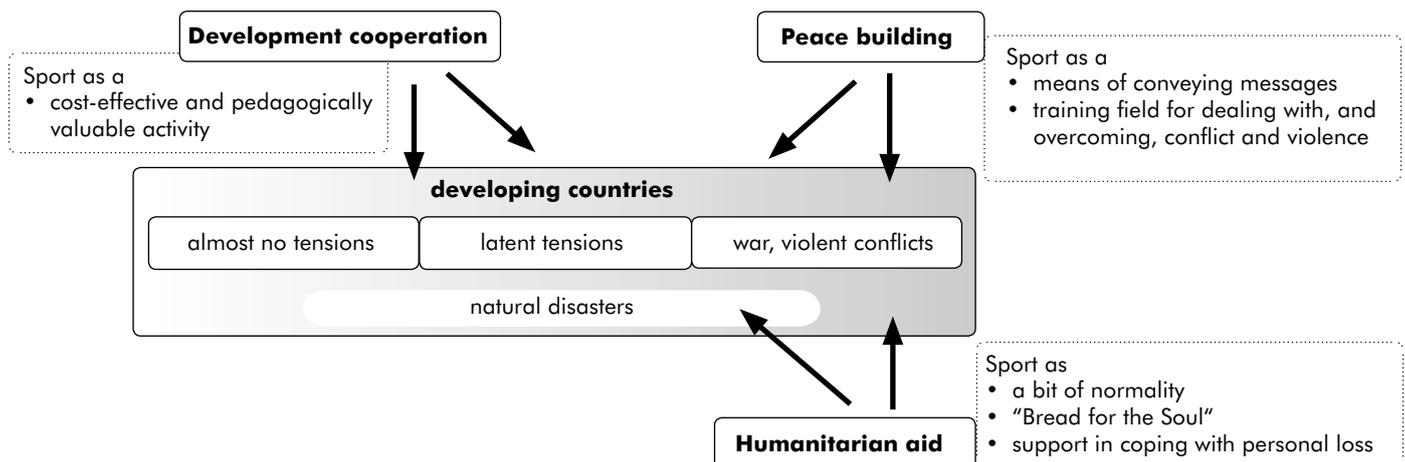
Under the auspices of development cooperation, those forms of sport are needed, that allow as many to participate as possible, and that have an integrating effect. The link to psycho-social subjects within specific contexts is also very important. The focus should be on exercise, games, and dance, i.e. on sports that function according to uncomplicated rules, that require the simplest of facilities and equipment and that can be played on village fields and in neighbourhoods without a special infrastructure. Traditional athletic activities should be just as

important as international ones. Because participation in athletic activities is generally more difficult for girls and women, it should be consciously furthered, and include special events if the cultural context necessitates it.

Ambitious and talented athletes can be encouraged and supported only to the extent that they have been admitted to clubs or that solutions can be found in cooperation with the federations for specific kinds of sport.

3. EFFECTS OF ATHLETIC ACTIVITY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

3.1 Overview



SPORT AS A TOOL FOR PEACE BUILDING

3.2 The most important objectives of athletic activities**1. Improvement of general well-being (intrinsic value of sports)**

Sport offers an activity that is structured and enjoyable, that develops skills, channels emotions, shows how to use rules, and facilitates shared experiences. Physical activity promotes good health and fitness, and leads to physical well-being.

2. Activity and distraction

While playing or dancing, attention is turned from misery to pleasure and enjoyment. Sport as "Bread for the Soul" does not change the situation but it can change the atmosphere. It can console by contributing to a daily life that is filled with more hope and countered with more strength.

3. Experiencing self-esteem through the furthering of skills and capabilities

This is achieved on the one hand by learning specific techniques for a particular sport, and on the other hand by accepting different roles such as team captain, referee and line judge, leader of warm-up exercises, good soul as water carrier for the players, author of slogans imparting humanitarian messages.

4. Exemplary training for reassurance and reconciliation in conflict situations

In every sport, there are rules that have been established for playing together and for competing against each other. The border-crossing that leads to violence can be made very apparent in sport and limited by conflict-regulating means. This ritualised conflict resolution can be transferred to everyday situations.

5. Exemplary training for the right dosage of aggressiveness

Aggressiveness that conforms to the rules is necessary and desirable in sports. No goal can be reached without it, and competitions would lose their purpose of comparing performance among the participants. A well-measured dosage of aggressiveness – the ability to prevail combined with consideration – is one of the main competencies for shaping a way of life. One should be able to win. Losers merit respect and gratitude because, without their efforts, the victory of the winner would not be possible.

6. The feedback culture of sports strengthens the ability to communicate

To receive and give feedback implies being perceived as a social being capable of dialogue. Language competence and thus an increased ability to communicate create the solidarity that is important for experiencing human security and inclusiveness. At the same time, the feedback culture of sports provides metaphors that vividly describe and convey the central themes and aspects of structuring a way of life. It encourages skills that allow the recognition and shaping of structures. And it furthers the ability to envisage and consider several possibilities for solving a problem, to anticipate, to develop strategies, and to expose and analyse correlation.

7. Experience of belonging and of identity within the group

The appeal of group identity should be purposefully and explicitly used for an ethic of social orientation, of fair play and of resolving conflict.

8. Sport also mobilises spectators, the neighbourhood and the village community

If sport activities are taking place in the middle of a village or neighbourhood, they offer an attraction for the entire community. Auxiliary activities, such as various ethnic groups' presenting traditional games and dances, can strengthen the integrating effect. Through participating side by side, equality becomes obvious and the occasion quickly turns into a village festivity.

9. Sport as a means for increasing awareness, for disseminating information and for maintaining values

Sport events offer an ideal platform for increasing the awareness of the people. For instance, messages can be conveyed through sketches, rituals and the commitment of opinion leaders. Not only sport idols can enhance awareness; children and adolescents

have a way of touching their parents more directly and of encouraging contact among neighbours.

10. Sport as a means of communication that goes beyond the boundaries of language, gender and social class

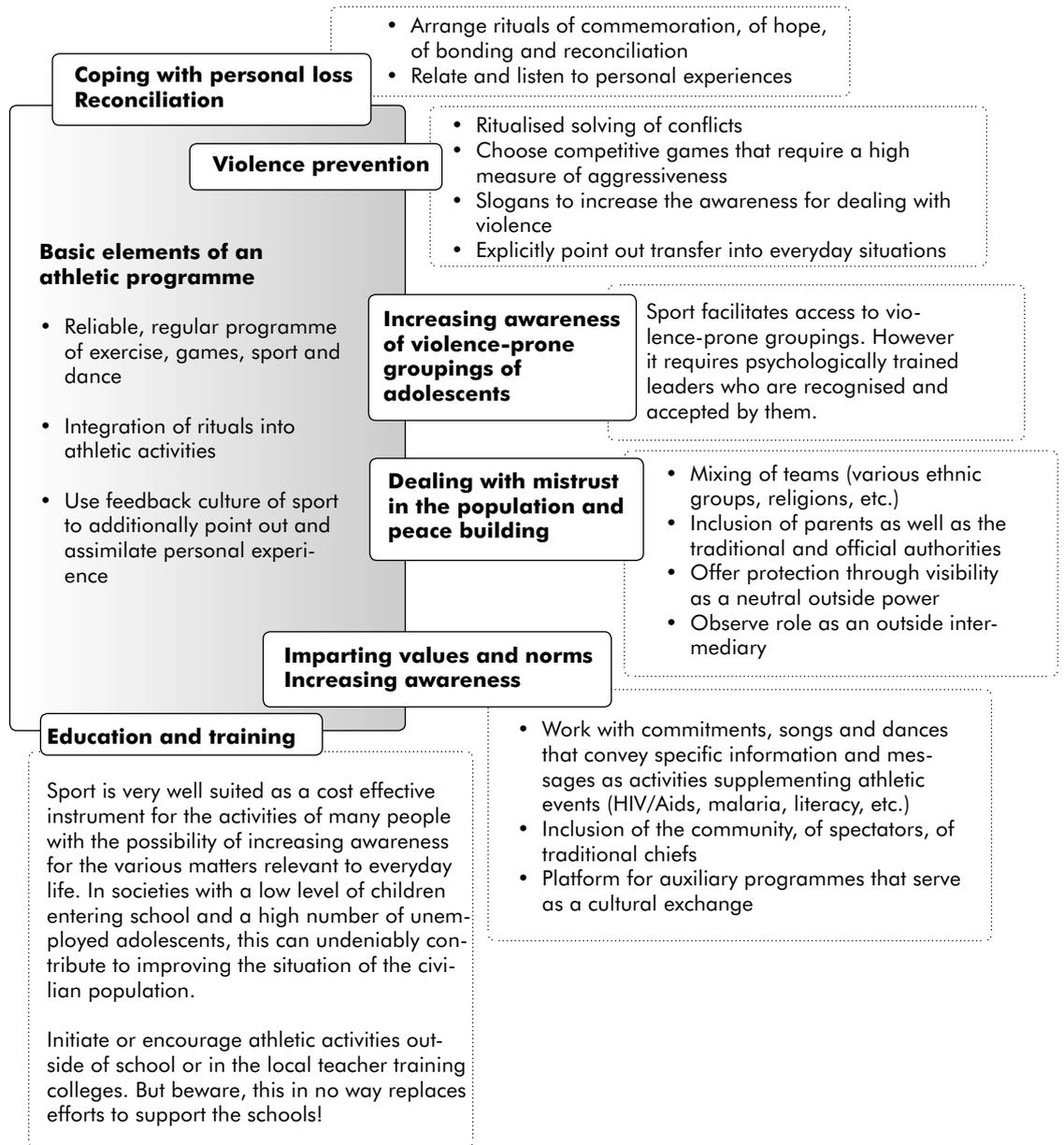
Dance, or sports such as football, are optimal means for experiences in common. They represent an oasis of equal opportunity. Manoeuvring around the ball or moving in rhythm call for skills that can be acquired in the shortest possible time to be able to participate, and that are independent of gender, social background and life history.

3.3 Key issues for which sport can be used

Context	Core responsibilities of the SDC	Key issues
Natural disasters	Emergency aid, rebuilding	Coping with personal loss
Countries exposed to violent conflict	Emergency aid, rebuilding Peace building	Increasing awareness of violence-prone groupings, peace building, dealing with mistrust, reconciliation, coping with personal loss
Countries with latent tensions	Poverty alleviation Peace building	Peace building, dealing with mistrust, education, imparting values and norms
Countries without major tensions	Poverty alleviation	Education, imparting values and norms, violence prevention

SPORT AS A TOOL FOR PEACE BUILDING

3.4 Activities and tips relevant to the key issues



Coping with personal loss is not the same as treating trauma

The treatment of trauma should be in professional hands. Not every traumatic experience leads to post-traumatic stress disorder. The criteria for a diagnosis of the various traumata are described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV: American Psychiatric Association, 1994) and in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) published by the World Health Organisation. So-called debriefings immediately after traumatic experiences can be counter-productive.

Sport can help in coping with personal loss and moving together can loosen rigidity. Take local customs into account so that feelings will not be injured!

EXAMPLES

“Sport pour la paix” in Côte d’Ivoire

As part of a programme to support the peace process in Côte d’Ivoire, the SDC launched the intervention project “Sport pour la Paix” in 2003. The project in the west of the bifurcated Côte d’Ivoire is situated both in the area of the opposition, the “Forces nouvelles”, as well as in the area of forces loyal to the government. The population is composed of various Ivorian ethnic groups, of internally displaced Burkinians and of Liberian refugees. Mutual mistrust dominates the atmosphere.

Local animators organise games and sports at least two to three times each week on public grounds, in the neighbourhood or on a school’s playing field. They have been trained to specifically make use of the conflict-preventive potential of sports through appropriate warm-up games and forms of competition. Every three months, or according to the particular situation, they organise special events for sport and culture, the so-called “Rencontres de rapprochement” (encounters of rapprochement). The entire community, the “Chefs traditionnels” (traditional chiefs) and official authorities are included, so that the commitment and rituals for peace are seen by all. Women’s groups from different ethnic backgrounds, which can perform their traditional dances and thus demonstrate the peaceful coexistence and togetherness of ethnic groupings, are especially encouraged. This is even more important because there are several internal social conflicts that overlap and must be taken into account.

Thanks to this project, 32 village chiefs from the region have founded a “Council of the Wise”. One village alternately invites other villages to a tournament and public festivity that feature a particular peace building motto. T-shirts with the emblems of Côte d’Ivoire and Switzerland, imprinted with “Sport pour la Paix” and “Ensemble pour la paix”, are leaving their mark in an atmosphere laden with conflict and tensions. A third, neutral force is supporting activities that further reconciliation and, in spite of the escalation in violence, is remaining in the country. It is an important sign for the people. According to an African proverb, “Ton frère se reconnaît lors du deuil, et non lors de la cueillette des arachides”. (You know who is your brother at the time of bereavement and not at the time of harvesting ground nuts.)

Cricket connects the nuclear powers of India and Pakistan

In 2004, both India and Pakistan martially demonstrated their rivalry and fitness to fight with their nuclear tests. In the same year, an Indian cricket team was also touring Pakistan. The teams of both countries are among the best in the world. The matches of the two nuclear powers did not take place as part of a world championship but explicitly under the sign of mutual rapprochement and reconciliation. The matches in Pakistan were viewed by thousands of Indian and Pakistani fans, without leading to riots. In the meantime, the atmosphere between the nuclear powers has relaxed. On 7 April 2005, buses ran between India and Pakistan for the first time in decades, and the Pakistani cricket team was on a return visit to India where it received an enthusiastic welcome. The atmosphere in the stadiums is no longer poisoned. As the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* reported on 8.4.05, the teams are cheered and acclaimed by both sides. It is significant that the article did not refer to the results of the matches, but it did state that “the decisive steps must now be taken by the politicians”.

SPORT AS A TOOL FOR PEACE BUILDING

4. IMPLEMENTING ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

Sequence	Remarks and tips
Choose the fields of operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select a place that is easily accessible (village or neighbourhood playing field) in agreement with local officials and traditional authorities
Define context and key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the context (natural catastrophe, war, etc), the corresponding key issues become relevant (see above) Caution! Regularly adapt the key issues and the priority activities affiliated with them to the changing context
Other actors and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local or international NGOs or UN organisations
Define activities to be offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine activities to be offered, and possible division of target groups (for example, according to age, violence-prone adolescents) in agreement, or in collaboration, with other actors
Select persons to lead programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit persons who will assume the primary responsibility for athletics, if possible through national training colleges for (sports) teachers (recruitment could include unemployed sports teachers, for instance, and should include trainers from the region) Recruit assistants: local leaders who express an interest Be sure that women are also involved
Instruction/training of those selected to lead the programme	<p>Prepare those persons leading the programme for their functions by referring to the objectives that have priority; minimal instruction should include a briefing on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determining the scope of athletic activities Job description with duties and obligations Sport as a popular sport, inclusion of different ethnic and religious groupings Joint instruction for boys and girls Special tips with regard to target groups, rituals, key issues Liaison with other psycho-social activities Pedagogic guidelines and model lessons Dealing with talented children and adolescents who are especially interested in sports, placement in athletic clubs and federations Management of materials Collaboration with authorities and partners
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select those sports that need as little infrastructure as possible Have as much material as possible produced locally (goals, nets, marking devices) Adapt the use of materials to local conditions. (Example: If 80 children are sharing a single ball in the public school, it is not appropriate for 80 children to be practising with 20 balls in their free time. Unless one makes them available to the school.) Detailed outline of responsibility for managing materials
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular examination of objectives and adaptation
Evaluation	<p>Minimal evaluation in connection with monitoring, since the stipulated criteria will be reviewed with those leading the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of activities, number of coaches/leaders (M/F), number of participants (M/F) Inclusion of psycho-social aspects: existing rituals and issues that have been addressed Inclusion of the environs, collaboration with partners <p>If possible and desirable, criteria and effectiveness can be reviewed by means of an external evaluation (E & C)</p>

Special case with regard to the situation in camps (refugees or internally displaced persons)

- Cooperation and agreement with camp management (for instance UNHCR)
- Agreement with present relief organisations with regard to activities being offered (Caution: take into account the mandates of the organisations)
- Recruit head of sports from the camp, include the camps own authorities
- Offer sport activities for various age groups (older people also like to exercise and need diversion)
- Provide equivalent sport activities to the local population (conflict prevention by avoiding envy)
- A tournament combined with a village festivity creates opportunities for the displaced and local population to meet (conflict prevention)

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND LINKS

- Sport for Peace and Development, SDC, Bern 2005
- Konzept Sport und Entwicklung, DEZA (Bern) BASPO (Magglingen), 2003
- MehrWerte im Sport, Strategien zu präventivem Handeln und zur Gesundheitsförderung, A. Lehmann und M. Schaub Reisle. Magglingen, 2003
- Mouvement, jeu et sport avec des enfants et adolescents socialement défavorisés, Guide méthodologique et recueil d'exercices, Magglingen / Côte d'Ivoire, 2005
- www.deza.admin.ch/sport
- www.sportanddev.org
- www.sport2005.ch
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