

Uganda: Supporting disadvantaged children and youth development through athletics

Project name	Athletics for Development, Uganda
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Partners	Ministry of Education and Sports; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development; Office of the Prime Minister; German Olympic Sports Confederation; World Athletics; Uganda Olympic Committee; Uganda Paralympic Committee; German Athletics Association; Uganda Athletics Federation; other international and local organisations
Duration	May 2018 – September 2022



skills that will later help them gain a foothold in the working world. German development cooperation trains coaches for this purpose. They are role models and figures the young people can trust. The coaches give the children and young people a stronger sense of self-esteem and help them to develop prospects for the future. During training, they address health-related topics such as HIV prevention and alcohol abuse. Sport is not just physical exercise, it is part of their education.

Together with local, national and international partners from the fields of policy-making, civil society, business and academia, German development cooperation has built up a sustainable sport portfolio that also helps strengthen civil society and promote democracy. In this way, sport serves as an innovative instrument that drives holistic sustainable development – for each individual child and for society as a whole.

‘Athletics for Development’ in Uganda

Since 2009, World Athletics, former International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), has gained expertise with the ‘Kids’ Athletics’ approach in the use of sport and athletics for motor skills development in Uganda - especially in school sports. Building up on these experiences, Uganda was chosen by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) as the first partner country to implement ‘Athletics for Development’ (A4D). The aim of the project is to support disadvantaged children and youth in their personal development through athletics, to strengthen social cohesion and dialogue within and between communities as well as to use athletics as a tool for improved health, education and inclusion in school but also in out-of-school contexts.

Background and context

Athletics in Uganda has a longstanding history of success with two Olympic Gold Medals and multiple World Championships won by Ugandan athletes. Nowadays, many children and youth in Uganda are interested and active in athletics with a hope of becoming champions one time. Whereas this dream may never come true for most of them, this interest creates a platform to tackle challenges of socially disadvantaged children and marginalised groups (e.g. refugees). By developing their social and life skills, they can live a healthy and responsible life and become role models for others themselves.

The ‘Sport for Development’ approach

The United Nations recognise sport internationally ‘as a means to promote education, health, development and peace’. German development cooperation uses the opportunities offered by ‘Sport for Development’ as well. Sport allows children and young people to live healthy lives, and it teaches them to take on responsibility, behave fairly and resolve conflicts peacefully. These are key



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Children participate in hurdling.

Children with disabilities participate in skills demo.

Children playing a local traditional game.

Having its roots in 'Kids' Athletics', the A4D approach was jointly developed by the partners and national experts of the project. The methodology uses basic athletic movements (running, jumping and throwing) and local Ugandan traditional games to develop motor skills, vocational skills (e.g. for carpentry) and life skills (e.g. respect, empathy) of children and youth. All games and training sessions are age-specific and uniquely tailored to the developmental needs of children and youth in Uganda. Therefore, the project especially focuses on creating meaningful educational activities for children, promoting healthy lifestyles and creating inclusive access for marginalised groups such as children with disabilities as well as refugees through athletics. Also, A4D consistently supports the use of local resources for the production of sports materials (e.g. hurdles). Through training of teachers and coaches in the methodology, the project helps to develop capacities in Uganda that have a sustainable impact on the individual development of the target groups.

Partners

German development cooperation activities in the field of A4D in Uganda are carried out in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, among others:

- Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES)
- Ministry of Health (MoH); Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD); Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)
- Uganda Olympic Committee (UOC)
- Uganda Paralympic Committee (UPC)
- Uganda Athletics Federation (UAF)
- World Athletics
- German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB)
- German Athletics Association (DLV)
- United Nations Agencies (i.e. UNICEF, UNFPA)
- School Sport Associations; local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) & local governments

First Lady/Hon. Minister of Education and Sports, Janet Museveni, is Patron of the programme. The MoES serves as the Ugandan

political counterpart of the project, securing its smooth implementation and communication. It also convenes the Advisory Board that closely monitors, advises and lobbies for the A4D project.

Successes to date

In 2018, the partners' commitment to the project was confirmed with the establishment of a Training & Resources Network (TRN). The TRN consists of 24 partner organisations that ensure the nationwide application and local institutional anchoring of A4D. Since then, members of the network exchange their experiences, take part in advanced A4D trainings and implement activities for children and youth such as A4D-festivals.

In cooperation with all stakeholders a comprehensive A4D manual was produced in 2019. It serves as a guideline for practitioners by providing theoretical and practical knowledge about A4D. The aim of the manual is to enable teachers, coaches and young leaders to foster sustainable development through athletics.

Based on the manual, 25 'Master Trainers' were trained in an extensive, multilevel A4D training course. They are now themselves passing on their knowledge as multipliers and instructed almost 100 teachers and coaches all over Uganda by 2019. The coaches and teachers have been implementing activities directly with the target groups in five projects. Among others, the projects are on strengthening the inclusion of visually impaired girls in schools near Kampala, or supporting the improvement on physical education, health and wellbeing of children and youth in the refugee hosting communities in Adjumani (Northern Uganda).

Way forward

In cooperation with the MoES, the primary focus will be to continuously anchor and disseminate A4D in Uganda. Further, the project aims to enrich the curricula by embedding the methodology within the educational system and becoming an integral part in the training of teachers. To ensure that the methodology is implemented by the teachers and coaches in high quality, a quality assurance system will be used consisting of multiple trainings and feedback through observations. Also, the development of a digital version of the A4D methodology is planned for 2020. Highlighting the successful implementation of A4D in Uganda, other 'Sport for Development' projects have started to show interest and use of the approach in other contexts, such as Colombia.

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