



Implementing development goals: Sport and health

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 and 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 and health contributes directly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in this case specifically to SDG 3 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages'.

This paper provides practitioners and theorists operating in the field of development cooperation with an overview of the ways in which sport can be used in the context of health. It introduces the different approaches and priority areas, offers insight into the practical lessons learned and results achieved so far and presents example projects. The sector project 'Sport for Development' also offers additional materials as well as advice on mainstreaming the approach in the context of health and on the use of sport in other sectors.

2. Background

Health is simultaneously an objective, a prerequisite and a result of sustainable development. Globally health has improved considerably over the past 25 years but progress is not evenly distributed. There is still a long way to go before the objective of 'health for all' is achieved.

The quest for healthy lives for all is happening against a complex and shifting backdrop. Our increasingly globalised, interconnected and mobile world poses new risks to health while the old ones have not yet been overcome. This

Regular sport plays an important role in preventing non-communicable diseases.

presents new challenges for health systems that are already being pushed to the limits of their capacities and financial capabilities. All around the world the search is under way for innovative approaches to the prevention and control of diseases.

More than 36 million people currently live with HIV and an estimated one million people die each year from AIDS-related diseases. Other infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria and hepatitis C are having similarly far-reaching effects. Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia are worst affected but the scale of suffering combined with international mobility mean that these communicable diseases need to be fought at the global level.

Young people are among those worst affected, particularly by HIV and AIDS. According to UNAIDS, 30% of all new HIV infections occur in the 15 to 24-year-old age group with young women and girls disproportionately affected. A key objective of German development cooperation is therefore to help change behaviour and protect young people in this age group through a variety of methods, including measures to raise awareness.

Non-communicable diseases (such as heart attacks and diabetes) are another important pu-





blic health issue. WHO estimates that they are responsible for around 70% of deaths each year. Insufficient sport and physical activity is a key risk factor for these diseases. Contrary to popular belief, it is not only industrialised countries that are affected by the lack of physical activity. Changing lifestyles and habits mean that people in developing countries and emerging economies are also less and less physical active. According to the United Nations, one in four people worldwide are likely to experience mental health problems at some point in their lives. The effects can be particularly devastating in developing countries and countries affected by crises and conflicts and are often exacerbated in such contexts by a lack of professional support. Sport can be used to respond to these global public health challenges – and as a means of

Sport improves well-being, individual self-worth and mental health – and can aid recovery from severe emotional stress.

preventing, raising awareness of and combating disease and health hazards. Encouraging children to lead active lives, raising awareness among young people of HIV, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, and using sport as a tool

to support those working through traumatic experiences are just a few examples of how sport can be used to promote health and well-being. Given the broad appeal of sport, particularly among young people who would otherwise be difficult to reach (for example because they do not go to school), sports activities are an ideal way to promote health-related development objectives.

3. Approaches and priority areas

Sport can be used to promote health in a variety of areas: sport and communicable diseases, sport and non-communicable diseases, sport and psychosocial health and sport and healthy lifestyles. There are also a number of effective, tried-and-tested ways in which the power of sport can be harnessed to prevent violence, which in turn can have a major impact on health. This is the objective of a separate strategic approach focusing on sport and violence prevention, which is also being carried out as part of German development cooperation.

- Sport can be used to raise awareness of the risks of communicable diseases such as HIV, AIDS and tuberculosis in a fun and age-appropriate way.

Namibia

Strengthening girls and young women

Girls and young women in Namibia face major challenges growing up. In addition to marked gender inequality, Namibia has one of the highest HIV rates in the world, and one in five women fall pregnant for the first time before their 20th birthday. The sector programme on 'Sport for Development' therefore focuses on measures to improve the perspectives of girls and young women. It not only facilitates access to sports activities, but also works with this target group to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS and promote health and life skills using sports education methods.

Together with partners such as the German Football Association (DFB), the Westphalia Football and Athletics Federation (FLVW) and the Namibia Football Association (NFA), a 'Girls' Centre' was opened in Windhoek in 2016. For young sportswomen from disadvantaged families it serves as a safe space where they can come to participate in sports and take advantage of other educational and social services. For example, the centre offers information on training, qualifications and employment in the hospitality and tourism sector for young sportswomen who live at the Girls' Centre and in the surrounding township of Katutura/Windhoek. It also helps them to find internships at tourism companies.

While the Centre can only cater for a small group each year, the NFA's Galz&Goals programme works with around 3,000 girls and young women nationwide. A football- (Football4Life) and basketball- (Basketball4Life) manual provides coaches with information on issues such as gender, HIV and AIDS, alcohol, drugs, safe sex and contraception and how to integrate these issues into training units. A quantitative 'before and after' study of a test group of participants showed that, over the



course of just six months, girls participating in the programme had already significantly increased their knowledge of health-related issues and that more girls were making use of HIV testing services.

- Through specific training, coaches can learn how to convey information, act as role models and help participants to reduce high-risk behaviour. Coaches can also run their activities in a way that reduces the stigma associated with certain diseases.

Owing to its popularity, sport provides a platform for raising awareness of diseases and infection risks (for example in the case of HIV and AIDS) through training measures or at sports events.

- Sports events can be used to raise awareness and inform members of the public, and thus broad target groups, about communicable diseases. Health services such as voluntary HIV testing facilities and advice centres can also be set up at tournaments and sports festivals. It is particularly important in this context to work with trained and professional organisations from the field of health and to ensure protected spaces are provided.
- Famous sportsmen and women are role models for whole generations of children and young people. They can be used to spearhead health campaigns aiming, for example, to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS, the importance of using condoms and non-discriminatory treatment of people living with HIV.
- For girls and young women in particular, female coaches often become confidants and can create a safe environment in which issues relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights can be freely discussed.
- Sport encourages people to eat healthy, exerci-

se more, reduce smoking and drinking and thus helps to prevent non-communicable diseases.

- Access to high-quality sports activities enables children and young people, in particular, to practise a healthy lifestyle from an early age and means they are more likely to maintain these habits in later life. In addition to club sports, good sports coaching and physical activity programmes in schools play an important role in this regard.

- Sport can be used to rehabilitate people with cardiovascular problems, cancer, dementia, and physical and mental disabilities.
- Where individual counselling or psychotherapy is not available, sport can help people suffering from psychological stress due to displacement, war or violence. As well as having a positive effect on physical and mental health, sport builds confidence, provides a welcome change from the demands of daily life and promotes peaceful coexistence. Engaging in sport together imparts a sense of security and normality, enabling participants to work through traumatic experiences and build their self-esteem.

4. Lessons learned and results achieved

For many years, sport has been used by German development cooperation and by many other state and non-state actors as a means of achieving health-related development objectives. Sport has proven particularly effective in 'opening doors' and engaging with target groups that are difficult to reach through other measures. 'Sport for Development' measures have been especially successful in the field of HIV-education and -prevention.



South Africa and Brazil 'Designed to Move' – for an active and healthy life

According to the World Health Organization, over 31% of young people worldwide are not sufficiently physically active. Emerging economies such as Brazil and South Africa are experiencing an alarming increase in the rate of physical inactivity within the population. In Brazil, physical inactivity is expected to rise by 34% by 2030. From 2013 to 2016, sports equipment manufacturer Nike joined forces with GIZ, operating on behalf of BMZ, to implement the 'Designed to Move' (DtM) Strategic Alliance. The aim was to raise awareness in schools and among policy decision-makers in South Africa and Brazil of the importance of sport and physical activity for the healthy development of children and society as a whole. In Brazil, the project worked with Brazilian NGOs and schools to develop training methods for an exercise-based programme comprising both after-school activities and activities that are integrated into lessons. Teachers and coaches received training in how to apply these methods. They reached around 2,000 children between the ages of six and twelve. As a result, active games, energising activities and 'active breaks' are now integrated into maths and Portuguese lessons.

In South Africa, the alliance worked with the 'Sport for Social Change Network' (SSCN) and the Department for Sport and Recreation and the Department for Education. Existing training programmes were revised in line with the seven design filters of 'Designed to Move'. These are training principles intended to ensure that sports activities are of a high standard and are so enjoyable for children that they will continue to lead an active life in future. Working with teachers and SSCN partners, these sports programmes were incorporated into the children's 'life orientation' lessons – as there is currently no Physical Education in the South



African syllabus. More than 4,000 children have benefited from the measures directly, and the measures have been continued by the partners since the end of the project. UNESCO has also shown great interest in the project's experiences in South Africa and is integrating these into the Quality Physical Education Process which is being implemented in South Africa and other countries.

Monitoring activities by external partners in both countries confirmed the success of the project. In South Africa, for example, the physical inactivity of participants fell from 34% to 12%. In both countries, the importance participants attach to sport for their health increased by 84%. Teachers also observed improvements in attention span of students, discipline and communication in schools.

In this area, particular emphasis is placed on training coaches. As a first step, it is often necessary to ensure that they themselves are aware of the relevant issues. In training, they learn how to create a deeper understanding of HIV and AIDS through their sports coaching and discover how they can become confidants and role models.

Sport has already been used to great effect in Namibia (see below) and the Youth Development through Football (YDF) project, which has been implemented in South Africa and nine other African countries. Additional training for coaches was developed in the form of the 'YDF Manual for HIV Prevention. Guidelines for Teaching Football and Life Skills'. Monitoring activities carried out by the University of Johannesburg showed not only that participants' knowledge of HIV and AIDS improved after taking part in sports programmes but also that their respect for and acceptance of those living with HIV increased.

In many cases, sports events such as tournaments and sports festivals have been used to conduct awareness-raising campaigns (in Namibia, for example) and provide additional health services such as HIV testing and advisory services. The key to success in these cases is to ensure that coaches, associations and NGOs operating in the field of sport are able to establish a network of contacts with professional health services. Coaches can then use the contacts made at events to increase awareness of health services among participants.

Activities in the area of sport and psychosocial health are currently being tested in projects operating primarily in a refugee context – including the 'Sport for Smiles' project in the Palestinian territories. While sport cannot replace psychologists or other forms of support, it is clear that a safe, unencumbered space combined with

physical activity, fun, a sense of community and the targeted use of sports education methods can make a very important contribution in these contexts, especially for children and young people. Coaches can also act as intermediaries for further psychological support services and other health services.

Sport improves physical fitness and supports a healthy lifestyle.

Moreover, all 'Sport for Development' projects promote a healthy lifestyle and therefore contribute to preventing non-communicable diseases. In the 'Designed to Move' Strategic Alliance with sports equipment manufacturer Nike, special emphasis was placed on promoting an active lifestyle (see previous page). In Brazil, a curriculum for training coaches has been developed based on the 'Treino Social' approach. This ensures that a variety of issues are incorporated into football training – from promoting a culture of peace, gender equality and environmental awareness to general health-related issues, hygiene and nutrition. Monitoring activities by Brazilian partners and the German Sport University Cologne showed that children who had taken part in "Treino social"-programmes over the course of several months also incorporated more sport and exercise in their lives beyond the programmes.

These experiences, approaches and priorities show how versatile sport can be as a means of furthering health-related development objectives.

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