

## **Sport as a catalyst for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)**

### **Tove Paule – Former President and Honorary Member of the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports**

Breaking the cycle of poverty by 2015 is the aim of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). The MDG's program consists of eight clear and specific goals ranging from ending poverty and hunger to global partnerships. It is understood that global poverty reduction requires continual and diverse interventions and commitments from all levels of governments and civil society.

The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympics Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF) has for the past 150 years contributed to building a healthy and active society in Norway and since 1982 has used its core business - sport - to contribute to reducing poverty in developing countries in Africa and Asia, which I am focusing on.

We believe that sport is linked to all of the MDG's but its principal influence relates to; MDG 1 – Ending poverty and hunger; MDG 2 Universal education; MDG 3 Promoting gender equity and empowerment of women; MDG 6 Combating HIV and AIDS; and MDG 8 Global Partnerships.

#### **Implementation Perspective - NIF's Story**

Quality Physical Education for All: For NIF this means quality 'sport for all'. NIF works in partnership with other national sport councils, governments, National Olympic Committees (NOC's) and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) in southern Africa (South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and Asia (Vietnam). NIF concentrates on enhancing sport systems through organizational capacity and community-based leadership.

#### **Success in Using Sport:**

NIF adheres to three basic building blocks including: 1) quality sport, 2) strong and sustainable organizational structures and 3) positive life skills. These three factors are the ingredients for sport to be a positive agent of change and a catalyst for contributing to the MDG's.

Over the last four years, our partners have trained approximately 6,000 community leaders, coaches and officials and are reaching approximately 300,000 children and youth. These young athletes are participating in organized sports and health education activities either through their community school or through one of the 700 community clubs that have been developed.

## **Building Block Requirements:**

### **'Long term Commitment' and 'Partner Support' toward:**

- Development and implementation of quality education for coaches including life skills education (MDG's 1, 2, 3, 6).
- Development of community-based sport structures (clubs, councils with policies and strategies) embraced by local government and the sport federations. (MDG's 1, 3, 8).
- Development of volunteer capacity through training of community leaders (MDG 1, 2, and 3).
- Development of sustainable programs through training and engaging of youth leaders (MDG's 1, 2, 3 and 6)
- Ensuring inclusiveness: strong advocacy and awareness programs and policy development to engage girls and women, and persons with disabilities (MDG 3).

## **Strategy for Quality Sport for All**

NIF's approach with partners from multinational, national, regional and local to develop structures for training of coaches, administrators, community leaders and youth, communications for sharing of best practices and methods to monitor and evaluate successes.

### Specific Examples:

#### 1) Kicking AIDS Out Network (MDG 8):

**Mission** The Network focuses on youth leadership development and is the international guide to good practices for the use of sport as a tool toward healthy lifestyle development.

**Method:** KAO Network is managed by NIF and trains youth to implement sport programs, facilitate training of their peers and lead by example.

**Results:** Over the last three years:

- Established itself with 25 member organizations from 17 different countries around the world.
- Trained over 300 Youth leaders from 17 countries who are training others and facilitating community program development.
- Members are facilitating sport skills development and positive life skills behaviors with over 250,000 active children and youth

#### 2) Supreme Council for Sports in Africa (Zone VI) Sports Education and Accreditation System (SEAS) (MDG 8):

**Objective:** On a regional basis NIF works with the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa, Zone VI is developing a sports education and accreditation system to ensure sports skills and life skills. Human rights knowledge is consistent across the region for coaches, officials and administrators.

Method: Use of expertise and existing best practices found within the region, developed generic skill and knowledge requirements for different levels of coaches, officials and administrators.

Results: Over the last four years:

- System developed and accepted by all national government representatives
- Piloted in three countries.
- Development of supportive tools such as club development manuals.
- Being monitored for results, challenges and gaps.

### **Programme Strategy for Girls Education**

#### **NIF's approach with partners:**

- Chair of the UNOSDP sport and gender thematic working group, influencing policy and change for girls and women.
- Assist in developing policies and support mechanisms at a multinational level
- Work directly at national levels to promote gender equity and programs for girls and women.
- Mandate policy implementation as part of our partnership terms of reference or agreements (i.e. gender policies, child protection policies), and support capacity development and advocacy programs specifically for women.

#### Specific Examples:

- 1) Multinational/International Level: NIF's Promotion of Women and Sport  
Objectives: Reduce gender violence against women (limiting factor for girls participation in sport)  
Methods: Prepare and gain acceptance internationally for guidelines on gender violence as a non-threatening tool to educate and promote policy development on gender and gender violence in sport.  
Assist partners to develop codes of conduct reflective of the guidelines.  
Results: Tool developed and eight organizations representing five nations signed on to date.
  
- 2) National level: NIF partners and supports the National Organization for Women in Sports, Physical Activity and Recreation  
Objective: To encourage and promote participation of women and girls in all areas, levels and abilities in physical activity, sport and recreation for fun and excellence.  
Methods: Through an advocacy program using multimedia, special events, training of youth and women on issues and developing tools for girls and women to without prejudice participate in sport.

Results: Annually trains over 300 girls and women on advocacy process for their right to play sports.

- Hosts weekly radio interviews promoting women's participation in sport.
- Engaged the Ministry of Sport to develop policy guidelines to increase participation of women and girls in sports.
- Implemented special events for women and girls to participate in sports special activities and events for example: International Women's Day, World AIDS Day promoting women in sport.
- Developed five women and sport chapters in five different provinces
- Representation on the International Women's Committee for Women and Sport.

3) Local Level: NIF partners and supports Sports Program re: Sport Clubs for Commercial Sex Workers, Livingstone Zambia

Objective: To reduce prevalence of HIV and AIDS via developing alternative employment opportunities for Commercial Sex Workers

Methods: Develop community sport and training clubs for commercial sex workers and their children.

- Employment training includes: tailoring, catering, computer skills and administration, opportunities for education scholarships
- Sports training includes: club administration, peer leadership, life skills training, coach and officials training.

Results:

- 20 sex workers now working outside of the sex trade (MDG 1 and 3)
- These women are leading sport activities in nine (9) different centers across the city of Livingstone, including life skills training and HIV and AIDS testing (MDG 6)
- 600 community children participating in the 9 center's sport programme (75% are children of sex workers) (MDG 2, 3, and 6)
- Competitive Netball Team made up of women from the 9 centers is accepted by regional Netball Association and invited to regional and national level competitions.

#### **Challenges of Sport achieving the MDGs:**

- Most projects are short term. There is a general lack of long term commitments from funders.
- Understanding of cultural differences is often not considered in program and policy development. One size does not fit all.
- Reflection on the value added of programs, policies and activities and a capacity to accept and move forward when change is required (requires strong and quality leadership).
- We are in a hurry to make things happen and don't always look before we leap (hear or see the gaps or the solutions).

- Strong desire to work with successful southern partners rather than risk developing new ones. This overburdening and sometimes reduces the ability of successful organizations to achieve results.

**Recommendations:**

Lead by example.....others will follow.

Support for the long term.

Assist, share and in some cases mandate acceptance