



SPORT RECREATION AND PLAY

For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY

unicef 



A photograph of a dirt path in a field. In the foreground, a person's arm in a maroon shirt is visible on the right. The path leads towards a line of trees in the distance under a clear sky. The text 'SPORT RECREATION AND PLAY' is overlaid in the bottom right corner.

**SPORT
RECREATION
AND
PLAY**

A GLOBAL COMMITMENT

In July 2002, the United Nations Secretary-General convened an Inter-Agency Task Force to review activities involving sport within the United Nations system. The Task Force, co-chaired by Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF and Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, brought together 10 UN organizations with significant experience of using sport in their work.[†]

Several months later, the Task Force produced *Sport for Development and Peace: Towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals*. The comprehensive report concluded that sport – from play and physical activity to organized and competitive sport – is a powerful and cost-effective way to advance the Millennium Development Goals, the agenda agreed to by world leaders at the UN Millennium Summit, and ‘A World Fit for Children’. In 2003, the Governments of Switzerland and the Netherlands hosted global conferences on sports for development. Both the Swiss conference, which led to the Magglingen Declaration, and the ‘Next Step’ conference in the Netherlands brought together for the first time sports, government, UN and non-governmental organization partners from around the world. That same year, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the role of sport as a means to promote health, education, development and peace, proclaiming 2005 as the International Year for Sport and Physical Education.

An inventory of programmes and activities in sport for development can be found at <www.sportdevconf.org> and <www.sportdevelopment.org>.

[†] Members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace include: International Labour Organization, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Environment Programme, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children’s Fund, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Volunteers, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and World Health Organization. The Secretariat was the non-governmental organization Right To Play.

Recommendations adapted from the United Nations Secretary-General’s report, *Sport for Development and Peace: Towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals*.

- 1. Incorporate sport and physical activity into the development agenda** of countries as well as of national and international development agencies, with a particular emphasis on young people.
- 2. Include the opportunity to participate in sport as an objective as well as a tool to achieve the Millennium Development Goals** and the goals of other international conferences and the broader aims of development and peace.
- 3. Include sport-related initiatives into the programmes of UN agencies**, where appropriate and according to locally assessed needs.
- 4. Facilitate the development of innovative partnerships involving sport for development.**
- 5. Urge governments to identify and make available resources for sports initiatives** that maximise participation in and access to ‘sport for all’ within their own countries, and sport-for-development programmes within overseas development assistance, and to strengthen the position of sport and physical activity in policy development generally. Also urge UN system partners, including the private sector, sports organizations and civil society, to generate in-kind and financial support for sport for development and peace.
- 6. Encourage the UN system to seek new and innovative ways to use sport for communication and social mobilization** at national, regional and local levels.



FOREWORD

In countries around the world, sport, recreation and play are improving health – both mind and body. They are teaching important life lessons about respect, leadership and cooperation. They are promoting equality for all and bridging divides between people.

UNICEF is now incorporating the power and potential of sport, recreation and play into our country programmes around the world. We are developing partnerships with all sectors and levels of society, from governments to the sports world to civil society in all its diversity, to get girls and boys on to sports fields and playgrounds, and to educate children and their families about the benefits of physical activity.

With our partners, we are mobilizing governments to develop comprehensive strategies to ensure that the right of every child to play is realized and that all children are provided opportunities to play. This means encouraging ministries to work together and mobilize resources. It means engaging both national sports associations and civil society to actively support these initiatives.

Our vision is clear. We see boys and girls running around new and rehabilitated playgrounds, fields and stadiums. We see schools providing physical education as part of their daily curricula and spaces where children out of school can safely play and spend their time. We see teachers trained in physical education and parents, young people and other community members trained as coaches. We see our children growing up healthy, committed to family and friends, prepared for the workplace and the responsibilities of citizenship.

We challenge the world to share this vision and to reclaim children's right to play.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. A. B. L.', is positioned above the title of the Executive Director of UNICEF.

Executive Director, UNICEF



THE SERIOUS BUSINESS OF PLAY

Early childhood

From the time they are born, before they coo and gurgle, infants begin to explore. They touch and hold, reach and shake, grab and taste – discovering the world not only with their eyes and ears but also with hands, feet and mouths. They play. Children at play are constantly at work – making new observations, asking and responding to questions, making choices and extending their imaginations and creativity. Play gives children the stimulation and physical activity they need to develop their brains for future learning. Through play, children explore, invent and create. They develop social skills and ways of thinking, learn how to deal with emotions, improve their physical abilities, and find out about themselves and their capabilities. A child's play forms a solid foundation for a life of learning.

School-aged children

As children grow, they acquire new skills and build on existing capacities. Climbing, running, hopping, skipping and jumping, they further develop and strengthen their bodies. Increasingly socialized, they master the more formal skills of life.

Games with rules and formal teamwork play an important role in helping school-aged children develop their physical skills and practise cooperation, mutual understanding and logical thinking. They learn about taking turns with their teammates, sharing, respecting their peers and valuing rules.

Adolescents

The search for identity becomes the major development task of adolescents. As explorers of a widening unknown, adolescents experiment with new behaviours and test possibilities. With the right guidance, they develop the skills they need to become responsible and caring adults.

Organized sport and physical recreation provide adolescents opportunities for self-expression, critical to this discovery process. They help adolescents to develop skills in communication, negotiation and leadership and to test and improve their abilities, which increases confidence. They allow young people a way to bond with adults and with one another, creating a sense of community and belonging.

Defining terms

This report defines 'sport' as all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. These include play; recreation; casual, organized or competitive sport; and indigenous sports or games.

Sport involves rules or customs and sometimes competition. Play – especially among children – is any physical activity that is fun and participatory. It is often unstructured and free from adult direction. Recreation is more organized than play, and generally entails physically active leisure activities. Play, recreation and sport are all freely chosen activities undertaken for pleasure.

“One of the benefits of sports is that it brings youth together. Sports help people solve their differences and problems. Young people can change their attitude by playing sport.

Some players who used to be in gangs, alcoholics and militia, and used to loot or rape have now become sportsmen who are now respected and active members in the society. If peace prevails in Somalia and we elect a government, there are some who can play at [an] international level.”

Salah Hussein Wasughe, member of a sports club in Jowhar, Somalia

PRACTICE FOR LIFE

Through sport, recreation and play, children and adolescents learn to exercise judgement and think critically while finding solutions to problems. They promote the spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play, teaching teamwork, self-discipline, trust, respect for others, leadership and coping skills. Essential to ensuring that children develop into responsible and caring individuals, they help young people meet the challenges they face and prepare them to assume leadership roles within their communities.

LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD

Children and adolescents are often sidelined because they are physically, mentally or visually disabled, or because they live in areas blighted by poverty, violence and armed conflict. Or because they are female. They lose more than the simple joy of having fun in their childhood; they also lose valuable skills that playing sports can bring to their lives. Often, it is the same children kept off the playing field who are kept out of the classroom.

Sport can be a powerful tool in promoting equality for all. Sport helps children with disabilities gain confidence that they can then apply to other aspects of their lives. When the focus is on scoring a goal or shooting a basket, children’s abilities become important, not their disabilities. When combined with health information, sports can also be used to educate communities on ways to prevent disabilities, and to stress the importance of vaccination, proper nutrition and the use of iodized salt.

Sport can help girls and young women claim their place in society. It can provide girls, who are often under tremendous pressure to begin sexual activity and child-bearing early, a chance to exert more control over their lives.¹ It can help girls gain respect for their bodies and develop self-esteem. It allows them to form friendships. It teaches girls self-sufficiency, personal autonomy and leadership. Challenging the stereotype that girls are weaker than boys, sport exposes girls to female role models, making goals in other areas of their lives seem attainable.

PLAYING FOR PEACE

In times of conflict, post-conflict and emergencies, sport, recreation and play can provide children and adolescents with a sense of hope and normalcy. They help traumatized children learn to integrate the experience of pain, fear and loss. They help heal emotional scars, creating a safe environment that enables children and adolescents to express their feelings and build their self-esteem, self-confidence and trust. Sport, especially participating in a team or a club, can provide former child soldiers a critical sense of belonging, necessary for their reintegration into the community.

Sport is a universal language that can help bridge divides and promote the core values necessary for lasting peace. It is a powerful tool to release tension and generate dialogue. On the playing field, cultural differences and political agendas

dissolve. Children who play sport see that interaction is possible without coercion or exploitation. Players interact within a framework of rules; a referee adjudicates on the justness of activity during a game. Penalties exist to sanction transgressions and enable a rapprochement between sporting adversaries.

The Olympic ideal

Since 1993, the UN General Assembly has unanimously adopted, before the Olympic Games, a resolution in support of the Olympic ideal. The resolution calls for the cessation of hostilities to provide athletes safe passage to the games and acknowledges the power of sport and the Olympic ideal as instruments to foster dialogue in global solidarity.





"I have asked my family and friends to play football together with me because I enjoy playing a lot. We will talk at our family dinner about the big game we played tonight."

"My favourite part in football is scoring goals and everyone cheering for me. I'm very happy when my team wins, but we lost today and I still feel happy because I had fun playing."

Naw Pa Eh, a 12-year-old refugee from Myanmar living in a refugee camp in Thailand

The commitment to a right to play

"States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts." Not only do children have the right to play but States must also "encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity."

Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

As part of their commitments to promoting healthy lives and providing quality education, world leaders at the United Nations Special Session on Children in May 2002 agreed to:

- "Promote physical, mental and emotional health among children, including adolescents, through play, sports, recreation, artistic and cultural expression."
- "Provide accessible recreational and sports opportunities and facilities at schools and in communities."

'A World Fit for Children' (2002)

"The practice of physical education and sport is a fundamental right for all."

Article 1 of the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (UNESCO, 1978)



A chest of dreams and hopes

Closed, it's a simple metal box, but open it and UNICEF's recreation kit, filled with toys and games, helps heal children whose lives have been disrupted in times of crisis. The kit, which contains supplies for up to 40 children, includes several types of balls, skipping ropes, coloured tunics, chalk, a measuring tape, a whistle and scoring slate. Tambourines, rattles, drums, dance costumes and indigenous games (adapted to the local culture) encourage children to express themselves. A teacher's guide, developed in each country and translated into local languages, helps ensure that activities are healing.

The chest becomes 'sports-in-a-box' when it's filled with balls, nets, air pumps – everything needed to play a variety of games from soccer, netball or volleyball to tug of war or handball. The sports kits provide communities the necessary equipment to initiate and develop sports programmes or to incorporate a fun sports component into existing child and adolescent projects. They are being used in a variety of ways to help develop girls' leagues, provide physical education in schools and start local sports clubs.





GIVE CHILDREN THE BEST START IN LIFE

Children play anywhere and everywhere – in organized settings, pre-schools, or at home. The simplest materials – water, sand, cardboard, wooden blocks, pots and lids – can help develop children’s language and analytical and decision-making skills. Parents, family members and other caregivers have a central role in making play part of their child’s learning and development.

- In **Turkey**, the FACT (Family and Child Training) programme encourages families with children under six to participate together in games and play activities for younger children. The extended family learns about the importance of early childhood education, nutrition, breastfeeding and play. With a better understanding of their children’s physical, psychological and cognitive development needs, families are encouraged to develop a stimulating, interactive learning environment for their children at home.
- In **Vanuatu**, particularly in rural areas, communities are building and running model pre-schools that follow an established ‘learn through play’ curriculum focusing on their children’s developmental needs. These ‘model kindies’, part of a programme spearheaded by the pre-school association Blong Vanuatu, have a safe indoor and outdoor space for children to play, a place for hand washing, and a ‘pretend play space’ where children can interact in lifelike settings, such as a model house, a clinic or a shop. Tyres are used for swings, local wood and bamboo for climbing frames, old canoes are filled with sand and water for play. The community supports the teacher, helps maintain the building and equipment and oversees day-to-day activities.
- Slides and see-saws, swings and outdoor games provided temporary relief for children traumatized by the massive earthquake in the city of Bam, **Islamic Republic of Iran** in December 2003. The quake claimed the lives of over 45,000 people and orphaned more than 2,000 children. Early childhood centres were quickly set up to provide physical and emotional support to affected children. An innovative combination of storytelling, arts, self-care education, relaxation exercises and play assisted children in their healing and recovery.

HELP CHILDREN SURVIVE AND THRIVE

Sports games, festivals and popular athletes have the power to gather large crowds, attracting people who are not normally reached by health services, especially those living in rural and remote areas. Events can be used to promote healthy lifestyles, stressing the benefits of exercise, good hygiene and proper sanitation and cautioning against health risks, including alcohol, smoking and other drugs. They can also be used to save lives – serving as a venue for immunizing children, providing insecticide-treated mosquito nets to protect families from malaria and dispensing vitamin A supplements.

- Nearly 5 million children between 6 months and 14 years of age were successfully vaccinated against measles in one of the biggest health campaigns in **Zambia’s** history. UNICEF, working with the non-governmental organization Right To Play, recruited athlete ambassadors, including famous Zambian football player Kalusha Bwalya, to reinforce key health messages plastered on billboards and posters.





Sport cements



friendships.

*On sports grounds, there is no difference between children.
They all learn how to win and to lose honourably.*



In some areas, play stations set up at vaccination posts brought children together to play games focusing on the importance of immunization. The local media aired radio jingles and television spots. The National Measles Campaign in Zambia, held in June 2003, was part of a larger global effort to halve the number of measles deaths by 2005.

- In the weeks preceding the 2003 Cricket World Cup, while teams were strategizing, resting from injuries and practising, the Indian cricket team took time to give a vital boost to the national polio eradication campaign, urging their fans to 'bowl out' the menace from the country. **India's** star cricketers, some former captains and commentators promoted polio immunization in TV commercials, competitions and events, particularly in the worst-hit state of Uttar Pradesh. The polio drive, timed to coincide with the World Cup, enabled the campaign to reach much larger audiences as cricket lovers sat glued to TV sets throughout the country.

One year later, during the high-profile series between India and **Pakistan**, the two captains – Rahul Dravid of India and Inzamam-ul-Haq of Pakistan – suspended their rivalry before the test match in Lahore. On the field the two heroes joined hands with children in support of the polio eradication efforts under way in both countries.

- In **Morocco**, where iodine deficiency disorders affect 2 million children, Olympic athletes are visiting schools, talking to students about the body's need for iodine and demonstrating how to use salt testing kits. The children are encouraged to test salt themselves and educate their families about the benefits of iodized salt.

Because athletes can be such powerful role models, the project is not only expected to prevent disabilities in the students and their families, but is also expected to encourage children and adolescents to participate in addressing this serious health problem in their larger communities.

- In **Tajikistan**, UNICEF recently finalized an agreement with the Tajikistan Mini Football Association. Countrywide football matches and a musical concert will be held to create awareness of a mass measles vaccination campaign. In 2003, tournaments organized by the Ministry of Education and the Tajik Football Federation were held in 800 schools throughout the country. The friendly competition, which brought together children, adolescents, families and communities, promoted awareness of good hygiene and proper sanitation practices. The final championship game in Dushanbe was part of the Tajikistan Children's Water Forum in August 2003.
- Tobacco Free Sports – Play it Clean! was the theme of the World Health Organization's annual World No Tobacco Day in 2002. Athletes, sports organizations, national and local sports authorities, school and university sports teams and the media joined a global campaign to educate the public about the harmful effects of tobacco. Promoting physical activity among young people in and out of school was the focus of the organization's annual Move For Health Day in 2004.

PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH A QUALITY EDUCATION

Reaching large numbers of children and adolescents, schools are an ideal place to provide opportunities for sport, recreation and play. In turn, sport, recreation and play improve the quality of education by developing the whole child, not just their intellectual capacities. They boost school enrolment and attendance and improve learning and educational achievement. Physical education classes promote good health practices and ways to prevent illness and disease, information and skills that children can take home to their families.

After-school recreation programmes in and around schools are excellent ways to create safe spaces for children and adolescents, as well as to continue learning beyond the classroom. Providing assistance with homework, nutrition, health and hygiene education, life skills education and job skills training during after-school activities helps children to reach their full potential.

Finally, sports can promote family and community involvement in education. Parents can become active in their children's education by participating as coaches and attending after-school matches and sports events.

- In **Rwanda**, peace education and HIV/AIDS prevention are taught through sport and physical education in primary schools for orphans and other vulnerable children. Teachers use a comprehensive guide that covers not only the technical aspects of sports but also demonstrates how to make links between sport and development. The guide includes how to include peace education in physical education sessions and how to address violence and conflict in sports, among other topics. It includes tools

"I left school at the age of 15 soon after my father died. For the last four years I have supported my family by doing tailoring at home. Leaving school left me isolated from my friends. Football changed that."

"During after-practice discussions with my friends and coach, I have learned more about HIV/AIDS and about how to handle boys. Before joining Chelsea, I had no information about HIV/AIDS."

"I like that football keeps me physically fit, that my family comes to cheer for me, and that travelling to different areas has also helped me to know the community. Before, people didn't believe that girls could play football, but now, they appreciate it."

19-year-old Mwanamisi Ali, goalkeeper for Chelsea Ladies football team, Kenya



“Tae kwon do keeps me fit and active and has taught me discipline. It has also helped me to deal with my personal problems. I smoked for a year. One day my tae kwon do master caught me smoking after practice. He took me to the side and talked to me about...smoking and how it could affect my performance. I stopped smoking from that day onwards. I hope to be a sports teacher one day.”

Tenzing Norden, a student from Yangchenphu High School in Bhutan and a black belt in tae kwon do

to develop students' life skills, emphasizing key messages on fair play and staying fit, and on the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. Over 500 teachers have been trained using the guide. The Ministry of Education plans to expand the programme and train teachers in each of the 12 provinces.

The National Volleyball Federation in Rwanda is also investing in primary and secondary schools. They have trained a total of 2,600 schoolteachers, who share their new skills during physical education classes and after-school sports programmes.

- In **Guinea**, where only 28 per cent of secondary school students are girls, a permanent national girls' football league and championship has been established by the National Football Association in partnership with the Ministry of Education, to encourage the development of girls' sports and improve their attendance in school. Preliminary rounds were held in all regions of the country and in Conakry, during which over 50 girls' teams competed. The regional matches will establish the best eight teams to compete in the October 2004 finals. Hundreds of girls will participate, acting as role models for younger girls. Live media coverage of the finals will allow tens of thousands of young people to watch the games live and millions to see girls achieve recognition and respect on playing fields.

Moving beyond these events, Guinea is working with the National Directorate of Sports in the Ministry of Education to ensure physical education is offered to all children in primary and secondary schools, with clear linkages to key development issues, life skills and health messages. Football is also being used in the Guinea-Forest region to bridge divides between communities, particularly among refugees, and keep young people involved in healthy activities. These activities are seen as fundamental to the maintenance of peace and security in the West African sub-region, using football as the common force.

- Segundo Tempo is a joint programme of **Brazil's** Ministry of Sport and Tourism and the Ministry of Education, supported by national partners and offered through primary and secondary schools. By providing children a comprehensive four-hour programme to complement their regular four-hour school day, Segundo Tempo helps ensure that children are kept safe and continue learning outside school hours. The curriculum includes nutrition and health education, homework assistance, sports and complementary activities that are intended to link sport and recreation with hygiene, life skills, HIV prevention and the development of social values. In just one year, the programme has reached 1 million children and 2,300 teachers in 26 states. The goal is to reach all 39 million school-aged children and youth in Brazil by 2010.
- In **Zimbabwe**, the Youth Education through Sport programme, led by young people, requires participants to commit to staying in school and to volunteering in their communities. The aim of this nationwide programme, supported by many national and international partners, is to teach young people life skills, and equip them to become peer educators who contribute to their communities as positive role models. Since 2000, the programme has reached 25,000 young people, half of them female.

PROTECT YOUNG PEOPLE FROM HIV/AIDS

Sport-related organizations and leagues are uniquely poised to spread crucial knowledge and prevention messages about HIV/AIDS to young people. They can increase young people's access to services, teach life skills, bring communities together, and, particularly, address young people in a language they understand. HIV/AIDS education can be provided during practices, through coaching sessions, during events and at half-times. It can be done through several means, including by teachers, coaches and peers.

Through sport, young people have the opportunity to talk about HIV/AIDS openly and with sensitivity and learn ways to protect themselves from the disease, including how to resist unwanted pressure and intimidation. They may be more likely to respond to HIV/AIDS-prevention messages conveyed by their coaches and peers on the playing field than messages conveyed by their teachers in the classroom. An open discussion about HIV/AIDS can also counteract stigma and discrimination and promote care and support for those affected by the disease.

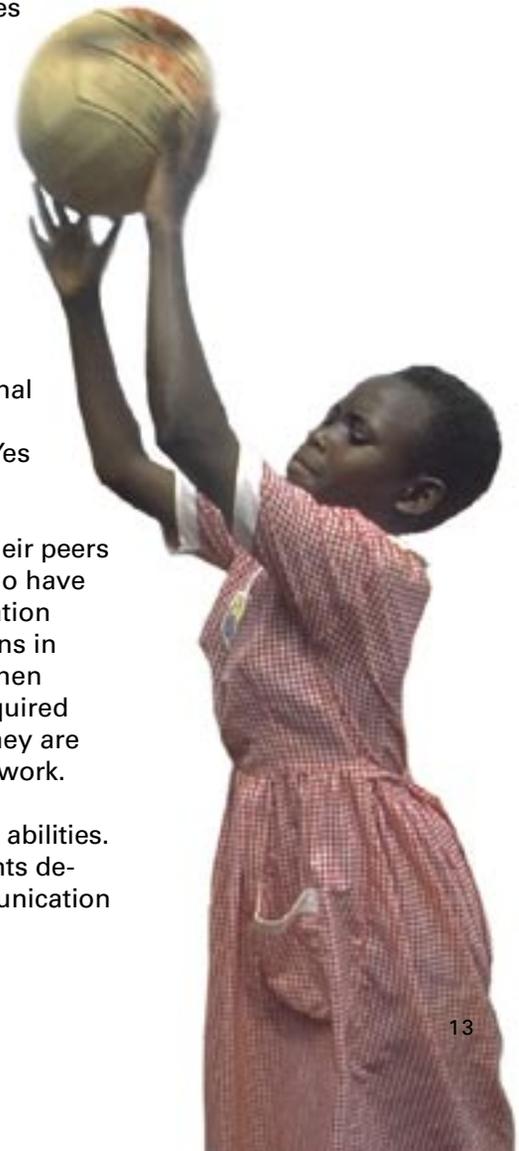
At the same time, sports participation provides young people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, including orphans and other vulnerable children, a safe and supportive space where they can feel a sense of belonging and be protected from exploitation and harm.

- In **Honduras**, the child rights-based programme Football for Life promotes HIV/AIDS prevention and protects young people ages 7-18 from sexual exploitation and child labour. Older adolescents volunteer as role models for younger football players, and each Saturday afternoon match is accompanied by a skit, discussion or event that highlights the dangers of HIV/AIDS and the importance of protecting children from harm. To be in the programme, which has 5,000 participants and 1,000 youth volunteers, children must attend formal education centres and schools. In addition to learning how to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS, children also learn about the downside of leaving school and of the risks of gang membership.

The programme is a collaboration of many partners, including the National Commission in favour of Improving Sports Facilities, the Central District Municipality and the mass media, which came together during the 'Say Yes for Children' campaign.²

- At the Feyenoord Football Academy in **Ghana**, adolescents are teaching their peers about HIV/AIDS and how to reduce their risk of infection. The players, who have been trained and supplied with education materials, organize peer education sessions in the academy's community, and more importantly, for their fans in places where football tournaments and recruitment matches are held. When the students travel home for the holidays, they also carry their newly acquired knowledge and skills about HIV/AIDS prevention. In their communities they are regarded as stars and heroes, which further increases the impact of their work.

The peer educators also learn about themselves and develop their coping abilities. While HIV/AIDS prevention is the goal, the initiative also helps adolescents develop important skills, such as problem-solving, decision-making, communication



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and critical thinking. It helps them handle peer pressure and cope with emotions and stress, while building their confidence in themselves and their future. It encourages young people to choose healthy lifestyles as they grow into adulthood.

A total of 2,156 young people have been reached with information on how to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS. When students from the Academy (funded by Feyenoord football club in the Netherlands) recently travelled to Lesotho and South Africa for football tournaments, they used the opportunity to talk about HIV/AIDS prevention with their international peers.

- Kicking AIDS Out! is an international network of organizations in **sub-Saharan Africa** working with partners in the North that uses sport, physical activity and play to teach life skills, raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, teach protection and motivate behavioural change. This African initiative, brought about by people directly affected by HIV/AIDS, mobilizes communities to develop innovative approaches to address the disease, particularly through sport. The network has produced a detailed guide for all those interested in including AIDS education in sports activities. It contains numerous diagrams and illustrations, provides the basic facts on HIV/AIDS, suggestions for planning training sessions and specific examples on how to incorporate fun and educational activities – such as role playing and discussions – into a wide variety of movement games.

Zambia: A coach's commitment

He was once a professional football player. Now, in Chainda, one of Lusaka's poorest compounds, coach Benson Lwenge wants children to know that AIDS kills. Four days a week, the children of Yasheni Community School, aged 8 to 14 years, flock to a makeshift sports ground in a field of overgrown grass, about half a kilometre from their school. Most of them have no sneakers or sportswear.

"There are three things that I want the children to know when they play sports – God, discipline and the fact that girls and boys are equal," says Coach Benson.

There's protection in numbers, so the time spent on the sports ground makes the children less vulnerable to exploitation. Parents and guardians are happy because after sports the children go straight home and avoid unsafe activities.

Twelve-year-old Loveness says that football has made her "stronger than her girl friends and as good as the boys." Her most memorable moment was when she played football in front of Zambia's most renowned international football player, Kalusha Bwalya.

Sport cements friendships. On sports grounds, there is no difference between children – whether they have parents or not – they all learn how to win and to lose honourably. Yesheni plans to strengthen its outreach activities and to use sport to identify orphans and vulnerable children. Their activities have been boosted by UNICEF's sports-in-a-box, donated by FIFA.

THE SCIENCE OF SPORT, RECREATION AND PLAY

Regular physical activity and play are essential for physical, mental, psychological and social development. Good habits start early: Research shows that children who exercise are more likely to stay physically active as adults. Sport, recreation and play have the potential to:

Strengthen the body and prevent disease. Regular physical activity builds and helps maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints; helps control body weight; helps reduce fat and blood pressure. Promoting physical activity is a powerful means of preventing chronic diseases. For nations, it can provide a cost-effective way of improving public health.

Physical inactivity caused some 1.9 million deaths worldwide in 2000. Globally, it was estimated to cause about 10 per cent to 16 per cent of cases each of breast cancer, colon cancers and diabetes, and about 22 per cent of ischaemic heart disease. In the United States, inactivity contributed to more than \$75 billion in medical costs in 2000 alone.³

Prepare infants for future learning. A national study of 3,000 children in Early Head Start programmes in the United States found that 3-year-olds in the programmes performed significantly better in a range of measures of cognitive, language and social-emotional development than a randomly assigned control group. Early Head Start includes opportunities for children to express themselves through art, music, movement, storytelling and indoor and outdoor play.⁴

Reduce symptoms of stress and depression. While research has confirmed that physical activity reduced symptoms of stress and depression in adults, a recent study of boys and girls ages 8 to 12 from three schools in the United States revealed that inactive children were more often depressed than active children.⁵

Another study revealed that high-school athletes were less likely than non-athletes to seriously consider committing suicide.⁶

Improve confidence and self-esteem. A study of seventh-graders from inner city neighbourhoods found that those involved in organized sports reported higher overall self-esteem and were judged by teachers to be

more socially skilled and less shy. The study also found that 13-year-old boys who were involved in sport during the past year were less likely to report having experimented with marijuana than 13-year-old boys who had not played a sport during the same period.⁷

Improve learning and academic performance. A study of two fourth-grade classes revealed that 60 per cent of children, including five children suffering from attention deficit disorder, worked more and fidgeted less on recess days. A 15-minute recess resulted in the children's being 5 per cent more on-task and less fidgety, which translated into 20 minutes saved during the day.⁸

In another study, 6- to 12-year-old children who received five hours of physical activity each week showed significant improvement in academic performance compared with children receiving only 40 minutes of physical activity per week.⁹

A study of 900 high school students examined the long-term benefits of sports, revealing that those who participated in sports in the 10th grade completed more years of schooling and experienced lower levels of social isolation than non-participants. (Involvement in sports, however, also predicted higher levels of drinking.)¹⁰

Prevent smoking and use of illicit drugs. A 1997 survey of over 16,000 public and private high school students revealed that athletes were less likely than non-athletes to have ever smoked cigarettes regularly or to have smoked within the past month. (The study also found that athletes were more likely to use chewing/dipping tobacco than non-athletes.) Athletes were also less likely to use marijuana, cocaine or other drugs, such as LSD, PCP (phencyclidine), speed or heroin.¹¹

Reduce crime. The causes of crime are complex and multidimensional. Sport may have an indirect impact on criminal activity by encouraging challenge and adventure, promoting positive use of leisure time, providing role models through coaches, and by giving young people a sense of purpose. Sport appears to be most effective when combined with comprehensive programmes that address wider social and personal development.



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REACHING ALL CHILDREN

Sport is an effective way to reach children and adolescents who are often excluded and discriminated against, including orphans, children with mental and physical difficulties, children living or working on the street, former child soldiers, sexually exploited children and children from indigenous communities. Sport offers them companionship, support, a sense of belonging and connectedness.

- In **Kenya**, the Mathare Youth Sports Association has created safe spaces for around 16,000 adolescents who live in the poorest neighbourhoods of Nairobi. More than 1,000 youth sports teams play over 10,000 matches a year on weekends and holidays and association teams have won many youth tournaments in Kenya and abroad. In fact, the programme, which links youth development, sports and environmental activism, is so innovative and successful that in 2003 it was shortlisted for the Nobel Peace Prize. When not on the field, players clear garbage and blocked drainage ditches in their neighbourhoods, earning the organization the United Nations Environmental Programme's Global 500 Award in 1992.

Part of the group's philosophy is helping its members develop life skills on and off the playing field. Over the years, the association has increased the scope of its programme. Today, in addition to sports, it operates an HIV/AIDS education programme, an educational scholarship programme, a photography project and numerous community service and environmental education activities.

- An estimated 1,000 school-aged children live in Barbulesti, a predominantly Roma community in **Romania**. Yet, the drop-out rate for girls in grades 5 to 8 reaches almost 50 per cent, with only 32 girls enrolled in the eighth grade, most of them not attending classes. At the Educational Day Centre, run by the local non-governmental organization Progress Foundation, sport is being used to keep girls in school and increase their status in the community. Children, trained by a professional sports teacher, play on two soccer teams; one for boys and another for girls. They are selected based on attendance and performance in school. Teamwork has helped the children overcome their social differences. Since the programme began, they have been more motivated to attend and do well in school. After only one year, school performance and attendance among children attending the programme, including among girls, has significantly improved. Dropping out is no longer an option.
- In **Cambodia**, a non-governmental organization called Phare Ponleu Selpak has a circus school where 120 children and youth aged 8 to 22 learn acrobatics and how to juggle, flip, balance and tumble. They practise five days a week and on some weekends. Students attend the circus school full time or part time, depending on whether they are still in school. Older students also attend evening circus classes to create new shows. A small portion of the proceeds from the shows is shared among the performers, who take the money back to their families and communities.

Members of Phare, many of whom are children at risk of exploitation, including those living or working on the street, orphaned, trafficked, sexually exploited and abused, have performed around the world. Eighteen children and youths are members of the school's awareness troupe, now focusing on raising community awareness of trafficking, drugs, landmines, HIV/AIDS and the rights of disabled

"When I was 10 years old, I had a car accident that left me paraplegic. I came to know ADD [Associação Desportiva para Deficientes] during the time I was completing my rehabilitation. I did not know about the possibilities of practising sports for people with special needs and I really liked this idea.

"With sports, my physical condition has improved a lot.... today, I consider myself an athlete of wheelchair basketball.... I know now that...I am equal to everybody else, with the same rights and duties. The only difference is the form of locomotion, the way I move around."

Larissa Blasco Leme, a 14-year-old from Brazil



persons. In addition to the circus, Phare also provides children with many artistic, cultural, social and educational activities, including painting, traditional music, singing and dancing.

- A national programme for children called Football for All, a partnership between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education in **Malaysia**, provides children with visual, hearing and mental disabilities the opportunity to play football in a structured and supportive environment. With support from the Football Association of Malaysia, coaches and referees have been trained by a team from the English Federation of Disability Sport. Football leagues have been formed at primary and secondary schools for boys and girls with disabilities, encouraging the development of a pool of young talent for Malaysia's national paralympic teams.

HEALING DURING AND AFTER CONFLICT AND EMERGENCIES

In the absence of formal school structures, sport, recreation and play can provide a way to educate children during and after conflict and emergencies, helping people to heal and make a new start. They can rehabilitate traumatized children, help reintegrate child soldiers into society and rebuild community spirit.

- In the southern city of Juba in **Sudan**, more than two decades of civil war have left children malnourished, orphaned and traumatized. The non-governmental organization Right To Play, in partnership with UNICEF, has introduced the SportWorks programme. To date, 87 basic and pre-school teachers, working in 50 schools with 15,000 children, have been trained to incorporate play into their classrooms to focus on five areas: mind, spirit, body, social cooperation and health. Another 55 coaches from local sports clubs have been trained to reach older adolescents and young people, using the same child development principles but with a focus on handball, basketball, football, volleyball and athletics. These teachers and coaches will train their peers, significantly multiplying the programme's effects.
- In **Colombia**, the Football for Peace project is a partnership between the High Commissioner for Peace, the Young Colombia Programme, government ministries and the private sector. Public spaces are being rehabilitated and turned into football fields to promote tolerance and conflict resolution. The project helps communities understand that all children, including current and former child soldiers, have rights and that no child should be marginalized. To promote gender equity, girls and boys play on the same team. Goals are not counted unless a girl has touched the ball. This year, around 20,000 children and adolescents aged 11 to 22, and 5,000 coaches in 50 municipalities are participating in the Football for Peace project. It is estimated that the peace messages are reaching more than 50,000 people in Colombia.
- Eleven years of conflict have touched every community in **Sierra Leone**, with more than half of the population displaced, economic activity severely disrupted and much of the infrastructure destroyed. In Kono District, one of the most devastated areas in the country, sport and play programmes and activities are used to assist returnees, internally displaced people and communities to rebuild their

lives. As part of UNICEF's community-based reintegration response, the non-governmental organization Right To Play, working with other partners, including the International Rescue Committee and Enfants Réfugiés du Monde, has trained 14 master trainers who have gone on to train over 100 coaches and teachers in the district. The majority of the coaches conduct activities at least four times weekly, involving at least 1,400 children every week. Trained teachers and/or volunteer coaches are now in schools attended by over 5,000 children.

- In the **Occupied Palestinian Territory**, restrictions on mobility and lack of security mean that young people have fewer opportunities to learn, play, socialize or participate in social and cultural activities. Football, volleyball, basketball, running and table tennis are being used in 156 schools in six districts as vehicles to provide safe play spaces and recreation opportunities to more than 5,500 adolescents ages 12 to 17. Specially trained coaches are helping adolescents use sports to channel their stress and frustration, express their opinions and participate in the development of their communities. School council meetings combine organizing a joint parent-adolescent sports day competition with planning and implementation of community improvement projects.

Sport is also linked to the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative in these districts. One objective is to create 'safe play zones', which are community playgrounds or safe spaces especially reserved for recreational activities. In addition, representatives, aged 12 to 16, have been elected to children's municipal councils in each of the child-friendly cities. The councils, which have identified recreation and sport as a key priority, give adolescents an opportunity to participate in a city-wide needs assessment and to plan and implement activities that help improve community life.

Sporting competitions held between communities, both in and out of schools, are central to the programme, and adolescents are actively involved in their management through school-based student sporting committees. Eight competitions in each of the five sports are held in each district at the end of the school year.

"I love football. I learned to play watching the big stars, like George Weah. I like to see how George plays with the ball, passes by the men, plays to the front, scores the goal. I want to be like George. Professional. I want to be an even bigger player than George. I want to be the world's best player. But before then, I need a coach."

"...I want to go back to school. I want to start learning. I know it's very important to read and write and know other things. I know that will help me play football even better."

12-year-old David, a demobilized child soldier from Monrovia, Liberia



Teaming up for Kids

A.C. Milan
Alliance of Youth Chief Executive Officers
America SCORES
Asian Cricket Council
Asian Football Confederation
A.S. Roma
AusSport
Australian Sports Commission
CARICOM (Caribbean Community)
Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention in the United States
ChampionsWorld
Columbia University, Mailman School
of Public Health
Commonwealth Games Canada
CONCACAF (Confederation of North,
Central American and Caribbean
Association Football)
CONMEBOL (South American
Football Confederation)
EduSport Foundation
FC Barcelona
Federal Office of Sports Magglingen
(Switzerland)
Fédération Internationale de Volleyball
Feyenoord
FIFA (Fédération Internationale de
Football Association)
Glocal Forum

Global Movement for Children:
BRAC, CARE, ENDA Tiers
Monde, Latin American and Caribbean
Network for Children,
NetAid Foundation, Plan International,
Save the Children, UNICEF, World
Vision, Alliance of Youth CEO's
(observers) and Oxfam (observers)
International Badminton Federation
International Council of Sport Science and
Physical Education
International Labour Organization
International Mountaineering and
Climbing Federation
International Olympic Committee
International Olympic Truce Foundation
International Paralympic Committee
International Rowing Federation
Jetix/Jetix Kids Cup
Johann Cruyff Foundation
Johns Hopkins University, Center for
Communication Programs, Bloomberg
School of Public Health
Kalusha Foundation
Kicking AIDS Out!
Laureus Sport for Good Foundation
Major League Baseball
Manchester United
Mathare Youth Sports Association
Miles & Associates (South Africa)
National Basketball Association (USA)



National Sports Council of Zambia
 Netherlands Confederation of Sports/
 Netherlands Olympic Committee
 NCDO (Netherlands Development
 Cooperation)
 Nickelodeon
 Northeastern University Center for the
 Study of Sport in Society (USA)
 Norwegian Olympic Committee and
 Confederation of Sports
 OlymPeace
 Olympiacos
 Playing for Peace
 Play Soccer
 Porto
 President's Council on Physical Fitness
 and Sports (USA)
 Real Madrid
 Red Deporte
 Right To Play
 SCORE (Sports Coaches' OutReach)
 Soccer for Peace
 Special Olympics
 Sport for All
 Sport in Action
 Sporting Goods to Go
 Sport Sans Frontières
 streetfootballworld
 Swiss Academy for Development
 Swiss Agency for Development and
 Cooperation

Tanzania Education, Sport and Physical
 Activity Promotion Programme
 TRAFFIC
 Truce International
 UK Sport
 UNAIDS (Joint United Nations
 Programme on HIV/AIDS)
 UN Development Programme
 UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural
 Organization
 UN Environment Programme
 UN Fund for International Partnerships
 UNHCR (Office of the UN High
 Commissioner for Refugees)
 University of Toronto
 UN Office of the Special Adviser to the
 Secretary-General on Sport for
 Development and Peace
 UN Office on Drugs and Crime
 UN Population Fund
 UN Volunteers
 US Soccer Foundation
 Valencia C.F.
 Women's Sports Foundation
 World Federation of the Sporting Goods
 Industry
 World Health Organization
 World Sport Football Ltd.
 Youth Education through Sport

 ...and others.

UNICEF, in its effort to ensure that all children are secured their right to play, collaborates with energetic and diverse partners at the global, regional, national and community level, including National Committees for UNICEF and private corporations. We work closely with a variety of programmes, funds and agencies within the UN system; national and municipal governments; international and national sports federations, sports organizations and bilateral associations; non-governmental organizations; the media; and young people themselves, to not only deliver important messages, mobilize communities and resources but also and most importantly, as partners in programmes to ensure long-term development.





COMMUNICATING THE MESSAGE

Sport has the power to stir imaginations and raise spirits. It is about human potential, striving and achievement. Sports events provide an ideal opportunity to get important messages heard. Through the media and Internet, larger audiences than ever before watch, read about and listen to events.

Public service announcements, in-stadium videos and banners, half-time shows, publications and event websites can leverage the power of sport to realize tangible advances for children, especially those most disadvantaged. Fund-raising for child and adolescent programmes, tapping into corporate social responsibility and working with sponsors of sports events provides additional avenues for spreading messages about child rights and mobilizing resources.

Global events

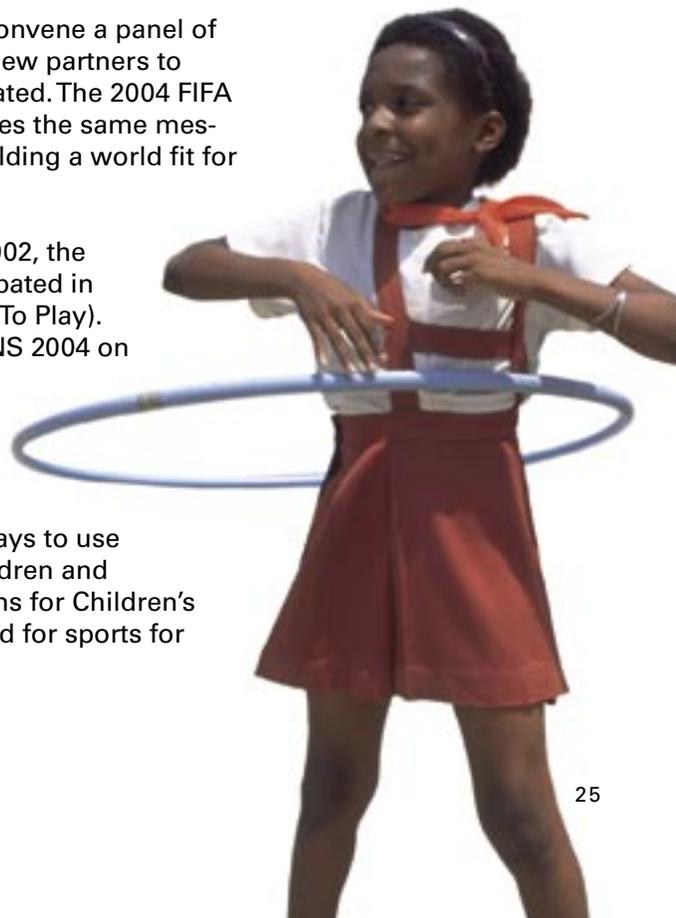
- The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) is playing a major role not only in raising awareness of child rights at their global events, but also in mobilizing their 205 National Football Associations to support UNICEF programmes. The UNICEF-FIFA alliance has resulted in ongoing collaborations between UNICEF offices and National Football Associations in over 70 countries, many now committed to long-term partnerships.

UNICEF first partnered with FIFA to promote the 'SayYes for Children' campaign during the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan, seen by over one billion people. The 2003 FIFA Women's World Cup in the United States was dedicated to 'Go Girls! Education for Every Child', UNICEF's global initiative to get the 65 million out-of-school girls worldwide back into the classroom. The campaign was seen and heard during the tournament through stadium announcements and video screenings, programme game books and web pages.

The 2003 FIFA Women's World Cup also provided a forum to convene a panel of experts on the issues of education and gender, and engaged new partners to ensure that girls are not only playing sports but are also educated. The 2004 FIFA U-19 Women's World Championship for females under 19 carries the same message. And in 2006, the FIFA World Cup will be dedicated to building a world fit for children.

- During the Salt Lake City Olympic Winter Games in February 2002, the UN Secretary-General, UNICEF and other global leaders participated in a round-table discussion organized by Olympic Aid (now Right To Play). Right To Play is also organizing two round tables during ATHENS 2004 on sports' role in preventing HIV/AIDS and in building peace.

UNICEF collaborated with the ATHENS 2004 Organising Committee at the Olympic Youth Camp to educate and mobilize over 400 young athletes, representing every nation, to become child rights advocates. The participants will learn ways to use their leadership and their sport to improve the situation of children and adolescents in their countries. They will graduate as 'Champions for Children's Rights' and form a network of young advocates for UNICEF and for sports for development.



Regional events

- UNICEF is partnering with CONMEBOL, the regional body for football in South America. The 2004 Copa América is dedicated to UNICEF, using the theme 'With children we can win!' Through advocacy and fund-raising, sports partners, the private sector and UNICEF will collaborate to support early childhood development programmes in **Peru**. The message is that early on children need to develop their physical and emotional strength in order to be strong footballers later in life. Activities in stadiums, in broadcasts as well as events off the playing field are helping to communicate this message.
- In June 2004, UNICEF launched the 'Fair Play for Girls' campaign in Dhaka, **Bangladesh**. A major part of the campaign is the new partnership between UNICEF and the Asian Cricket Council. 'Fair Play for Girls' seeks to raise awareness, generate public support and mobilize resources for girls' education in this region where there are 46 million children out of school and many children are excluded from organized games and sports, with girls being the majority in both cases.



National events

- The first International Women's AIDS Run in 2003, an all-women's race through the streets of Nairobi, **Kenya**, marked the first AIDS awareness event by and for the women of Africa. Benefiting women and children affected by HIV/AIDS in Kenya, it was led by the Kenyan First Lady, Lucy Kibaki, and endorsed by President Mwai Kibaki and other government ministers. The President challenged men watching the race, saying "...make up your minds today not to spread AIDS. If you do not make up your mind today, you are not a real man." More than 10,000 girls and women 14 and older participated, along with Kenyan marathon gold medallist Catherine Ndereva and bronze medalist Edith Masai.
- 'Let's Stop AIDS Together' was the motto of the 2003 **Georgia** Children and Youth Football Championship for the President's Cup, organized by UNICEF and UNAIDS with the support of the UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS in Georgia. Nearly 45,000 children, aged 12 to 15, participated, with girls playing for the first time. The annual tournament, initiated in 2001, aims to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent harmful habits among young people.



Special teams of HIV/AIDS advocates, accompanied by well-known pop singers, travelled to football tournaments across the country to conduct sessions on HIV/AIDS among the players and their fans. Forty teams of 12 to 15 young footballers all over the country wore T-shirts bearing HIV/AIDS messages while referees and fans also wore special jackets. Stadiums were plastered with HIV/AIDS posters and banners and advocates delivered leaflets on preventing the disease. Contests to test knowledge about HIV/AIDS were held during the games.

Athletes as ambassadors

Sport gives us heroes to admire and positive role models who inspire young people. These champions focus the world's eyes on the needs of children both in their own countries and abroad by visiting field projects and emergency programmes. They make direct appeals to those with the power to effect change and use their talents and fame to raise funds and advocate for children.



Local sports figures, heroes in their own countries, invoke civic pride and contribute to national heritage. They visit schools and youth clubs, reaching the next generation with important health messages. In the most effective programmes, athletes reinforce key health or child rights issues through repeated school visits.

Globally, UNICEF counts many former Olympians, world champions, footballers and other athletes among its Goodwill Ambassadors, including international football stars Oliver Bierhoff (Germany), Francesco Totti (Italy); George Weah (Liberia), Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (Norway); and Quinton Fortune (South Africa); Olympic gold medallist Johann Olav Koss; and the football clubs A.C. Milan, Feyenoord, Manchester United and Real Madrid, among others. They donate their time and celebrity to draw attention to the challenges facing children around the world.

- Manchester United was the first football club to take the initiative in developing an active partnership between the **United Kingdom** Committee for UNICEF and the world of football. 'United for UNICEF' was launched in 1999, with the partnership concentrating on raising money and awareness for children's education. Since 2003, this fund-raising and advocacy work has also been focused on the End Child Exploitation Campaign. To date the club has raised over \$1.9 million, with the club and its players helping to draw the world's attention to the plight of children in Afghanistan, southern Africa, Brazil, India, Iraq, Thailand and Uganda.
- Through their fund-raising and advocacy efforts in **Italy**, A.C. Milan and the Fondazione Milan have made a positive impact on immunization programmes for children through TV programmes, online auctions, in-school advocacy and other activities. Piacenza Calcio is also using their resources to help support children's programmes. And in Rome, Francesco Totti's book has to date raised some \$270,000 for UNICEF.
- Real Madrid and UNICEF have joined in partnership in **Spain** to leverage the power of football, using the goodwill of both organizations to help children. The partnership, 'Derecho a jugar' or the Right to Play, is focusing on national and global fund-raising and communication activities.

POTENTIAL HARM

The negative aspects of sport cannot be discounted. Sport can lead to elitism and exclusion, excessive alcohol consumption and drug abuse. It can lead to inordinate competitiveness and nationalism that can further divide communities and nations. There is always the potential for doping, cheating, corruption and violence. The benefits of sport, however, far outweigh these potential negative consequences.

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Most of the studies used in the report were based in the United States. There is little data available in the developing world on the benefits of sport, recreation and play. In the United States, however, there were many studies, from which only a few were selected for this publication. Because sport is increasingly recognized as a powerful tool for development, efforts are currently under way to gather research and evaluate sport programmes around the world.

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“Sport can play a role in improving the lives of individuals, not only individuals...but whole communities. I am convinced that the time is right to build on that understanding, to encourage governments, development agencies and communities to think how sport can be included more systematically in the plans to help children, particularly those living in the midst of poverty, disease and conflict.”

Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations



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