Association Sport – The Bridge - An overview

Sport – The Bridge is an association in the region of Berne, Switzerland, established in 2002. It commits itself to build bridges between persons based on the universal values of sport. Sport – The Bridge is politically as well as confessional neutral.

The principle of voluntary work is followed in all activities and all assignments are carried out without payment. The organisation has about 75 active and 150 passive members.

Sport – The Bridge is convinced, that every person is responsible to provide a contribution for a better world in the frame of his strength. The approach contains, that everybody can contribute by his own competences and knowledge directly and personally. Sport – The Bridge is convinced that every person and therefore also every country has the possibilities to develop itself. Therefore a mutual exchange and a mutual learning between human beings of different cultures shall be enhanced. The philosophy of the organisation is put down in ten guidelines.

Sport – The Bridge supports and initiates projects abroad and in Switzerland.

In November 2004 Sport – The Bridge started a project called „Ethiopia – Sport Builds Bridges“ in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The project builds on a connection between sport and pedagogy and contributes to new perspectives for street children. Based on a worldwide unique sportpedagogical concept the children get the possibility to go back to their families and to be integrated in the official school. Thanks to intensive efforts during the preparation and implementation as well as the inclusion of local partners, a functional project in the section of sport and development could be established within a short time. Since the handover of management to the Ethiopian staff in October 2006 the project is controlled, monitored and financed through Sport – The Bridge in Switzerland and supported by different professional assignments.

In Switzerland Sport – The Bridge is concentrated on the promotion of intercultural exchange and comprehension within the Swiss society. Several projects in related areas are part of the activities, too. The organisation carries out intensive days in official schools to the topic of development work and intercultural topics, participates in the set up of snowboard camps for blind and seeing young people and organizes every second year an intercultural event called “Ethnopoly” in Berne. In the project “win2gether” the Ethiopian and Swiss youth live the bridges between the two countries in a sportive way by taking part together in a same event at the same time, but in another country. Sport – The Bridge was participated also in the last two editions of the national sport event Gigathlon, which was organised by Swiss Olympic Association in the years 2006 and 2007.

The work of Sport – The Bridge is supported by a patronage committee which consist following persons and organisations:

- Adolf Ogi, old-member of federal council of Switzerland, ancient special adviser of the UNO general Secretary of sport for development and peace.
- Swiss Olympic Association
- Marco Blatter, ancient director Swiss Olympic Association
- Pascale Bruderer, Member of Swiss national council

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Ethiopia – Sport Builds Bridges

Initial Position

May the metropolises of the south be very different, in one point they are all similar: in a growing dimension societies are no more able, to give a frame to children, in which they can grow to a valuable and self-determined member of the society. It is assumed that alone in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia 60’000 children are living on the streets. This situation is in a moral point of view indefensible, and furthermore there is a danger: with a lost generation, grown up with the right of the strongest, drugs and no direct relations to the “normal” society, problems for the future are reassigned.

Resocialisation through sport

Sport – The Bridge makes a contribution to solve the problem of street children by developing, testing and spreading new and creative approaches. Sport stands central as a mean for development. Sport has an emotional language, which is understood by children intuitively. Thereby it is possible to attract children from the street and to integrate them step by step into a new world. Sport is not only an attraction, which helps to motivate the children, it also has its own values. As a platform of social interactions sport offers a perfect environment, in which behaviours and their consequences can be learned and practised in a playful way.

But daily headlines in newspapers about hooliganism, doping and brutal fouls also show us, that sport doesn’t only enhance desirable behaviours. That’s why it is very important, that sport takes place in a controlled field. For this Sport – The Bridge has developed a pedagogical model, which emphasises the use of sport as a mean. By daily sport lessons the street children are prepared during one year gradually for the integration back to society. Thereby the children go through five different modules which topics are “body”, “rules”, “acceptance”, “fairness” and “team” (KRAFTmodel).

At a glance

Aim

„Ethiopia – Sport builds bridges” shows as a pilot project new and creative ways, how the problem of street children in the big cities of our world can be faced. The project is seen as a model and is looking for persons worldwide that are interested to implement its way.

Approach

Sport is a language, which is understood intuitively. Nearly every sport can be used for (re)socialisation, if it is supported by a pedagogical approach.

Target group

Street children in the age between 6 and 13, which have broke up the contact to their families. The project specially addresses children that couldn’t be reached through other resocialisation projects.

Number of beneficiaries

- 2005: 40 children
- 2006: 100 children
- 2007: 160 children
- 2008: 220 children

Number of staff members

34 Ethiopians with multifaceted professional background
Further supporting activities
Who wants to integrate a street child back to his family, can not only work with the child. It is essential to work at the same time intensively with the family, which represents in most of the cases the origin of the problem. Through a highly individual support containing individual talks and observations the reason of the family break is searched and solutions are worked out. The aim is to strengthen the family in order to take over the responsibility of the child. For that goal activities to raise the income of a family are part of the work of Sport – The Bridge, too.

It is important that children and families can move in a secured and protected environment during the work of reunification. Therefore Sport – The Bridge offers, beside the sportpedagogical and family integration work different supporting activities. The children receive daily a well balanced Ethiopian meal, which reduces the stress to fight against hunger. At the same time a health crew (nurses and a psychologist) secure a primary health care and teach the children about hygiene, prophylaxis and HIV Aids prevention. Also the work can’t be seen as finished after a year when the child is back in his family and is going to school. Sport – The Bridge has therefore developed a follow up program to be in contact to the children and give support if needed.