

# MORE THAN CHILD'S PLAY:

Challenging Sport for Development and Peace  
for Conflict Affected Children and Youth



REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE 'MORE THAN CHILD'S PLAY'

Hosted and organised by ISS,  
Institute of Social Studies

With support and contributions from  
Antonio Restrepo Barco Foundation,  
Hivos, NCDO, Right to Play, Women  
Win, PeacePlayers International,  
streetfootballworld and War Child

19TH OF MAY 2009, THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS





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## // FOREWORD

As we gathered for the first time, four Master students from the Institute of Social Studies, strangers to each other then, coming from four different countries, with a wide variety of personal and professional experiences, we did not have a big plan. We were interested in conflict, children's rights and sport, we were eager to learn more about Sport for Development and Peace and we were enthusiastic and excited at the idea of working together to organise an event on this topic. Over the next six months, we studied government policies, academic literature and NGO programmes; we also met NGO staff, field practitioners, informed policy makers, expert psychologists and academics. We studied the current developments and discovered the burning issues in this field and we encountered overwhelming interest and support for what we had set out to do.

Following discussions into the early hours of the morning, fascinating human encounters, intense brainstorm sessions and hunting for funds, we organised 'More than child's play'. This international conference offered a platform to practitioners from various countries, academics and experienced and interested actors to share best practices, debate and discuss Sport for Development and Peace for Conflict Affected Children and Youth. The event challenged all participants to think about how sport can do more than just put a smile on a child's face in this complex and changing world. The conference rather than being an outcome has turned out to be the starting point for several projects. This publication is the first one. There is a call for further in-depth working groups on 'gender and sport' and 'monitoring and evaluation of sport programmes'. There is also a need for strengthening existing networks and improving connections between the actors. Hopefully, organisations in the field will set up a taskforce dedicated to these issues. As our studies at ISS draw to a close, we trust we not only have provided a platform for discussions, but also stimulated future initiatives. Our schedules are filled with follow-up actions, our heads are full of new ideas to ensure the continuity of this venture and our year is enriched by this invaluable experience. And none of this would have been possible without the help, support, enthusiasm and active involvement of contributors and participants.

Thank you.

More than child's play organising team:

*Maria Paula Ballesteros*

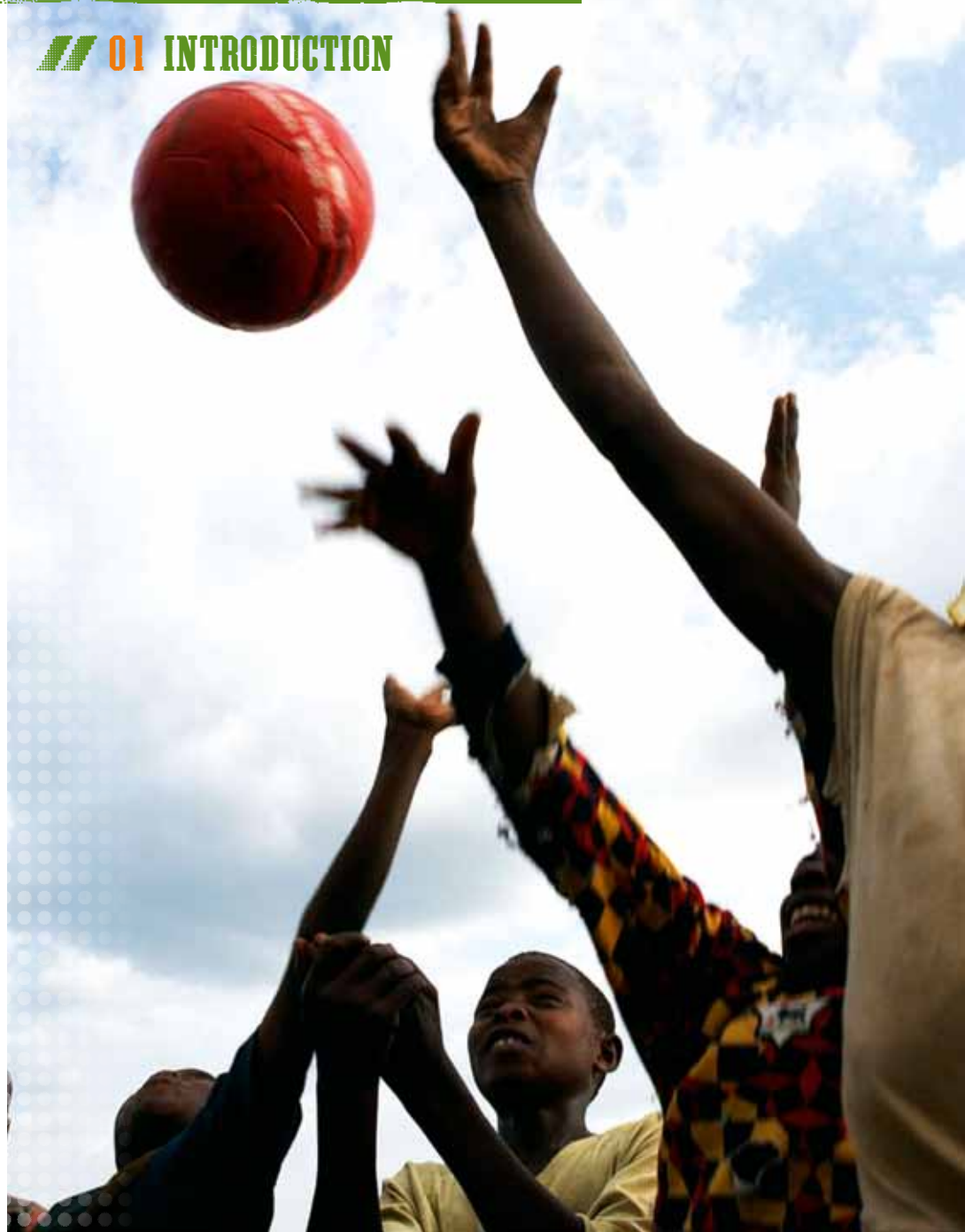
*Sophie Conin*

*Sergio Ferragut*

*John Kielty*



## // 01 INTRODUCTION





The objective of the conference *'More Than Child's Play: Challenging Sport for Development and Peace for Conflict Affected Children and Youth'*, was to identify further research areas that will help bridge concerns faced by policymakers, as well as to provide useful output for practitioners. Through a critical examination of the role of Sport for Development and Peace for conflict affected children, the conference provided a forum for constructive discussion. A better understanding of how to best enhance child welfare in pre- and post conflict situations is urgently needed. By hosting this conference, ISS is proud to continue its long tradition of being at the forefront of discussions on development.

### **Aim and background**

The conference followed up on discussions that took place at a recent conference jointly organized by the ISS and the Open University's International Development Centre, in the context of the Prince Claus Chair for Development and Equity for 2007/8. This conference, *'Young People in Africa: From Marginalization to Citizenship'*, examined youth agency in conflict and post-conflict settings.

The follow up conference *'More than Child's Play: Challenging Sport for Development and Peace for conflict affected children and youth'* was organized by Master's students from the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) on May 19, 2009. The aim of the conference was to critically examine the role of Sport for Development and Peace programmes in addressing the needs of children affected by armed conflict.

### **Many Children Suffer from Traumatic Experiences**

UNICEF estimates that *"Some 1.5 billion children – two thirds of the world's child population live in the 42 countries affected by violent, high-intensity conflict between 2002 and 2006."* (UNICEF, 2007). These armed conflicts have a variety of negative effects on children and youth. Through bombs, bullets and land mines, children become physically disabled. Children become refugees and orphans. They witness violence and are recruited as child soldiers. Children in conflicts are susceptible to intense physical and psychological trauma.

### **Potential of sport in post conflict areas now widely recognised**

Despite the horrible effects of conflict, the trauma suffered by children does not need to permanently victimise them. Psychosocial programmes can help overcome the consequences of traumatic experiences. Hope, tolerance, respect, empowerment, sense of security, normalcy, inclusion, positive relationships and team spirit all represent potential positive effects of Sport for Development and Peace programmes (UN, 2003).

For the past several decades, governments and NGOs around the world have been using sport as a tool to prevent recruitment by armed groups, to rehabilitate victims and to facilitate reconciliation.

The United Nation's year of sport in 2005 was an important recognition of the power of sport and its role as an apolitical tool with universal attraction that has the ability to support the healthy mental and physical development of children and youth. Even though Sport for Development and Peace is now widely recognised as an effective tool, developing guidelines for best practices remains a work in progress. Empirical evidence on effective strategies and methods are still lacking. Hopefully, this conference and follow up activities will contribute to fill in the blanks.

Through the evolution of programmes, the potential of play and physical activities to empower, reduce stigma, build trust and to bridge divides have been experienced by many children. Well designed programmes can achieve specific goals relating to the prevention of child soldier recruitment and for the rehabilitation of children affected by conflict. Today, Sport for Development and Peace continues to develop both in theory and in practice. Best practices, effectiveness and limitations are presently debated by involved parties from a variety of perspectives.

## **KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE CONFERENCE**

### **Prevention of Child Soldier Recruitment**

Methods of using sports for preventing the recruitment of child soldiers were discussed. Current child soldier recruitment practices fall short of the ideals formulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child which celebrated its 20th anniversary in November, 2009. The ongoing recruitment of thousands of child soldiers in countries such as Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar and Somalia proves the need for effective measures in recruitment prevention. Sport for Development and Peace programmes can play a role in reducing their vulnerability to recruitment by providing a reason for young people to stay in their existing communities. As a result, disaffected, abandoned and homeless children and youth establish stronger bonds that increase school enrolment and result in

fewer numbers turning to armed groups (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2008).

### **Rehabilitation of Conflict Affected Children**

Presentations and discussions addressed the role of sports in youth rehabilitation programmes and sports and youth as building blocks for communities. In a post-conflict setting, the psychosocial rehabilitation needs of children and youth are numerous and various. Sport for Development and Peace programmes support rehabilitation through the empowerment of physically disabled children, reconciliation with former enemies, social inclusion for refugees and internally displaced persons, reintegration for child soldiers and addressing gender specific trauma and community building, in other words: *“sport and play have proven extremely therapeutic in helping children overcome trauma”* (SDP IWG, 2008).

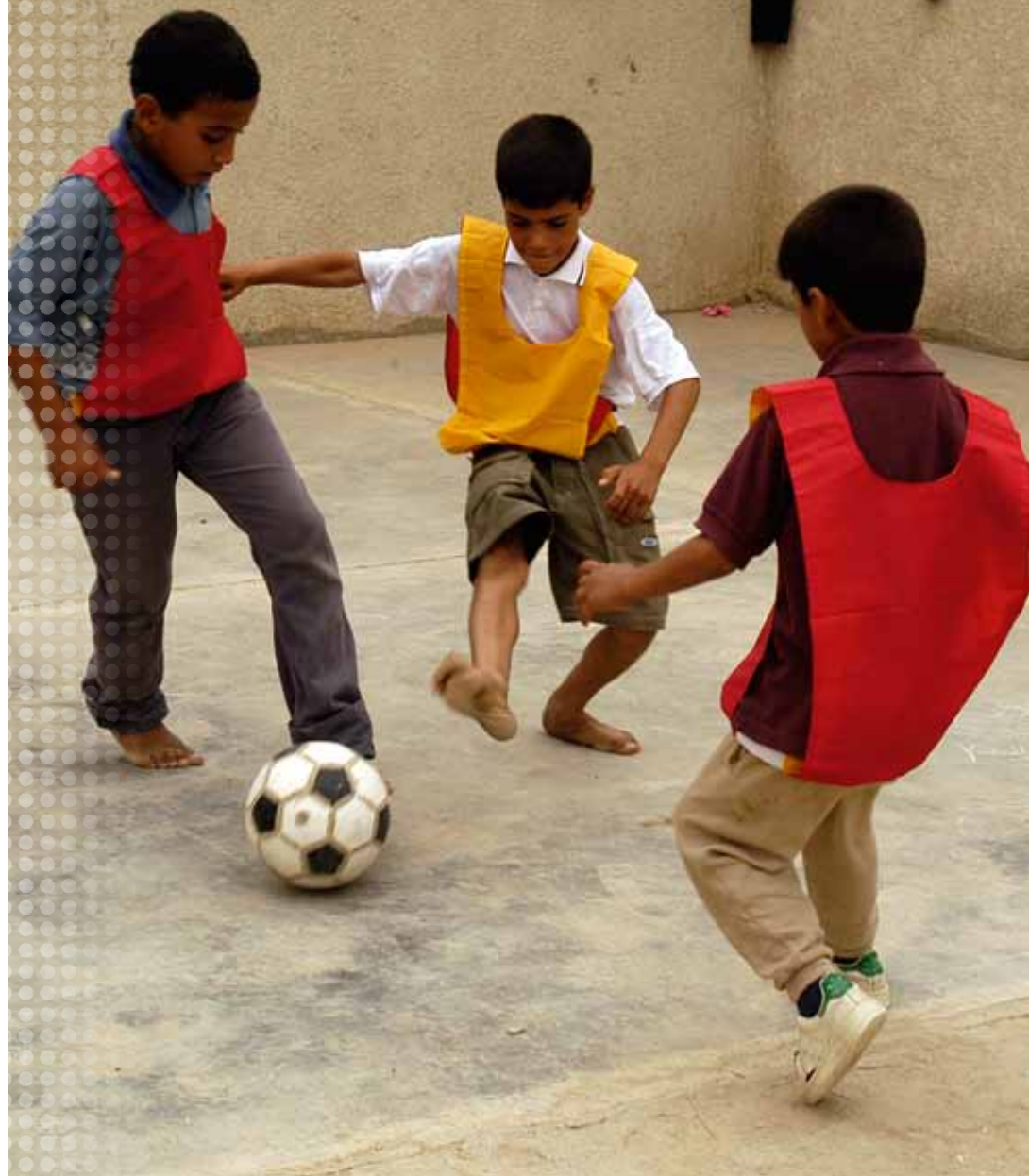
### **Sport and gender issues**

Presentation and discussion specifically addressed the issues surrounding girls and sport. Sport is commonly associated with boys, and girls are often actively discouraged from participation. A critical discussion of gender oriented interventions includes: how can Sport for Development and Peace deal with any inherent bias against the participation of girls? Is the recruitment prevention of girls adequately addressed in programmes? In what ways does sport facilitate meeting the specific needs of girls in post conflict settings? How do programmes work with the community to gain support?

### **Limitations**

Just as sport can be a major positive contributor for development and peace in conflict situations, badly designed or implemented programmes can harm children and youth's development. The risk of ineffective, or worse, harmful programmes; only highlights the need for greater consensus for effective approaches, best practices and reliable evaluations.

## 02 POTENTIAL OF SPORT FOR CHILDREN IN PRE- AND POST-CONFLICT AREAS



## BY PROFESSOR ALCINDA HONWANA

Alcinda Honwana is Professor and Chair of International Development (Africa) and director of the International Development Centre (IDC) at the Open University. Professor Honwana's work has given particular attention to the role played by local communities in processes of post-conflict healing, reconciliation and social reintegration of war-affected children and youths, especially child soldiers and abused girls. In 2009, Professor Honwana held the Prince Claus Chair, established by Utrecht University and the Institute of Social Studies to continue the work of the late Prince Claus by supporting research and teaching in the field of development coordination.



### INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY ALCINDA HONWANA

Alcinda Honwana's introductory statement pointed out the critical issues confronting the well-being of children and young people affected by armed conflict:

- The challenge to empower them to overcome trauma and stigma.
- The need to prevent their recruitment into violent political conflict.
- The imperative to promote their psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

### **Magnitude, visibility and involvement of children has changed alarmingly**

In the past decades an unprecedented number of children and youths have been drawn into active participation in warfare. However, the involvement of children in armed conflict is not a recent phenomenon. In the past, young people have been at

the forefront of political conflict in many parts of the world, even when it has turned violent. Today, however, the problem has grown to such magnitude that it has attracted public notice.

What is new is not just the visibility of civil wars but also that children are more deeply involved: in some places, they form a substantial proportion of combatants. Analysts of war have pointed out that most contemporary civil wars represent a “total societal crisis” in which social order is almost entirely disrupted. Many children are coerced into fighting; others are pushed into it by poverty and crises in their communities; others may be seduced by promises of glory or excitement. In these conflicts, children have ceased to be children.

### **Challenge: embed reintegration within children’s realm of play and recreation**

One of the great challenges, is to let children be children, and restore hope to the many that were drawn into these conflicts. Besides physical healing, the psychosocial rehabilitation of these youngsters is essential to ensure their reintegration into society. Such healing and reintegration strategies need to be embedded, not only in local world views and meaning systems, but also within the children’s realm of play and recreation.

### **Potential of sport**

Sensible sports activities are an ideal training ground for promoting and developing young people’s motivation and performance in a playful and enjoyable way. Sport constitutes an important instrument for the formation of young people. It teaches them fundamental life skills such as: to become team players; to manage victory; to overcome defeat; to be reliable and gain the confidence of other team members and to respect the rules of the game. Sport can play a role in:

- **Preventing the recruitment of children into armed conflicts.** This is a critical issue which addresses the causes rather than just the symptoms of the problem. How can sports activities strongly contribute to reduce children’s vulnerability to recruitment?
- **Empowering young people to overcome effects of trauma, combat adversity and rebuild their lives.** The rehabilitation and social reintegration of children affected by armed conflict is a critical aspect of post-war reconstruction and peace building. Social reconciliation, community building and participatory citizenship can be strengthened by sport.
- **Breaking gender barriers.** The experiences of girls and boys affected by armed conflict are diverse. Society often places a different set of expectations on them

and they are assigned distinct roles and responsibilities which define their lives. So, gender is a critical factor that needs to be carefully examined as we look to improve young people's situation. It is essential to involve both boys and girls in sport programmes.

### Youth need to be at the centre of the solution

Alcinda Honwana stresses the need to strengthen the dialogue between academics, practitioners and policymakers in this field. The challenge is to be more creative about ways to enable children and young people to develop and grow stronger. It is important to stop seeing them simply as a problem to be fixed. Young people are creative, vibrant and optimistic. They must be seen as a resource. They must be at the centre of shaping the policies and strategies that impact their lives.

## CONFLICT AND THE USE OF SPORT: A MODEST APPROACH IS RECOMMENDED

### BY PROFESSOR JAN PRONK

Jan Pronk is a former Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation, former Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations in Sudan and in 2002 received an honorary doctorate from the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague. In his Inaugural Address on 11 December 2003 (*Collateral Damage or Calculated Default*), Professor Pronk highlighted the Millennium Development Goals - halving world poverty in 2015 - and the politics of globalisation. Jan Pronk is currently a Professor in Theory & Practice of International Development at the ISS.



### Introduction

Professor Pronk explains that even though he has often spoken about the context of conflict, about dimensions of conflict and about proposals of conflict resolution

- and even though he is sports man himself- Pronk used to run daily – he considers himself a layman in the field of Sport for Development and Peace.

To prepare the conference speech, Pronk studied recommendations about using sport for peace building from the international community. His conclusion: sport can help prevention of conflict, but there are limitations. Most importantly, one should not have too high expectations. Some publications might be too positive about the potential of sport. Sport alone can not solve conflicts around the world. Furthermore, Pronk emphasized that being aware of the limitations and following the guiding principles developed by the international community is key. It helps to formulate realistic aims, to avoid common pitfalls and make use of success factors. In summary, Pronk promotes a modest approach using sport for prevention of conflicts and for the rehabilitation of conflict affected children.

### Potential of sport

Sport has many positive elements. Sport has the potential to give people hope. Sport contributes to health. Sport can support empowerment of groups and individuals. Participation in sport is an instrument to learn developing positive relations and team spirit. When used wisely, people can regain their self-respect and can learn to respect others.

### Limitations

There are limitations which should be recognised and dealt with:

- Sport can be used as a 'red herring': a deliberate attempt to divert attention from a conflict at community level or at macro level. Underlying differences and tensions in relations between groups can be sweetened using sport.
- People participating in sports can be manipulated by its organisers, by the people who benefit from matches and by the media.
- Sport can be used to feed antagonism: hostility that results in active resistance and opposition. For instance, football has been used in this way.

### Rights-based approach and other guiding principles

Pronk stresses the importance of following known guiding principles and avoiding mistakes of the past. The most important lesson is: when you do not deal with the underlying conflict, sport will not improve the situation. Therefore, a rights-based approach should be central when designing programmes. The Declaration on the Right to Development defines a 'rights-based approach' as a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process. It is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. Following a rights-based approach prevents a focus on symptoms and a



short-term perspective. Violation of human rights is often the cause of all misery. A rights-based approach leads to a more thorough analysis, better responses and better results.

Other important lessons learned are:

- Engage as many people as possible. If initiatives are developed for communities instead of with communities, they will backfire and possibly damage relations instead of improving them.
- Sustain: do not launch separate short-term actions but aim for long-term effect. History has shown that sustainable results are only in reach when development initiatives are carefully designed and planned involving local communities and stakeholders. Development is more important than sport. Development implies the self-expression of people, learning self-restraint and building group cohesion that lasts. People need to be involved from the start.

### **Use full potential without doing harm or raising false hopes**

Professor Pronk concluded by expressing his hope that the audience will take the limitations into account and will follow the guiding principles. Only this route offers the full potential of sport and play for prevention and rehabilitation of child soldiers.

## **WHAT'S NEXT? LONG-TERM VIEW REQUIRES INVOLVING YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT**

### **BY JOHN KON KELEI**

John Kon Kelei is a former child soldier from Sudan and is now an advocate for the rights of young people affected by war. Mr. Kelei is a Public Educator for War Child Holland and is currently working on a Master's degree in International and European Law at the Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands. He is the founder of the Cue Machar Secondary School Foundation, which is dedicated to building a secondary school in Southern Sudan. Kon Kelei is also a co-initiator and co-founder of Network of Young People Affected by War (NYPAW).



**Main message: “Caution: don’t use sport alone!”**

Kon Kelei agrees with Professor Pronk that sport is not a panacea. Nevertheless, sport and play are important to children and youth because they are vital elements for the health, happiness and the well-being of children and young people.

However, Kon Kelei stresses the need for lasting solutions to the problems of youth. Sustainability is key. Organisations have to move beyond ‘sport is good’. If organisations are not prepared for sustainable support, and only focus on implementing separate sport programmes, they should reconsider their efforts. Social and economic problems need to be addressed; education and jobs have to be available.

Involving youth to develop solutions for community problems is necessary for success. Unfortunately, most policy makers fail to see the limited influence of treaties and legal instruments. If youth are not involved from the bottom up, then treaties and laws are just ink on paper with little instrumental value. Mr. Kon Kelei challenges participants to take a broad and fresh view on sport for conflict affected children and youth.

**Where to start with integration when your head is full?**

The reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-child soldiers and young people affected by war is an integral part of the normalization of post-war societies. The question is: where do you start?

Many NGOs, government agents and international organisations start by offering young people emerging from war ‘psychological support’. Often this implies that the victims have to talk about their experiences. Children returning from war have their heads full with war traumas. Young people affected by war are preoccupied with thoughts and feelings including: fear of being attacked, mistrust towards others, screaming voices and terrible memories of murder and violence. However, research has shown that talking deeply about horrific experiences does not help to overcome trauma.

So when talking extensively about your experiences is not a good start, how can you proceed?

**Education is vital, but only effective in a later stage**

Kon Kelei states that if you put a traumatized child into a classroom with the best and smartest teachers of the world, the performance of this child will not improve, simply because the child’s head is full with the negative effects of the war. There is no room for education in the beginning. However, programmes need to address the need for education in a later stage and not overlook long-term essential pillars for rehabilitation.

### **Sport and play are a good way to empty heads**

What should be done? Sport and creativity offer important models for rehabilitation of children who have experienced trauma in war. Through sport, programmes create respect for others, inclusion, positive relationships and build team spirit. Through sport, victimized children can bring back the child inside them, hence 'emptying the mind'. Playing together as a team creates a bond, a bond that transcends ethnic barriers and leads to mutual understanding, respect and - last but not least - a lot of fun.

### **Sport helps children looking at the world from a new perspective**

Sport can be used to help children and young people emerging from war to absorb information of a different kind. In war or in training camps, child soldiers learn to deal with one kind of information: how to kill, attack, and how to be obedient to the commander in order to be a good soldier. For children and youth who did not participate in war, the only information which mattered was: how to find shelter, food and safety.

## **CONCLUSION: LONG-TERM VIEW REQUIRES INVOLVING YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT!**

Kon Kelei stressed that sport alone cannot result in reintegration. Many organisations engaged in reintegration and rehabilitation pursue short term programmes. The nature of these policies left Kon Kelei and many other young people emerging from war with one alarming question: what's next? His conclusion is two fold: a sustainable approach is needed which addresses underlying social and economic problems. Furthermore, youth should be involved from the start. Not for, but with youth should be the mantra of policy makers. Kon Kelei concluded with encouraging organisations, throughout the world, to use sport-based programmes to improve the lives of children and youth, using a well planned, sustainable and multi faceted approach, rooted deeply in local youth culture and communities.

## // 03 GETTING BACK ON TRACK



**A CRITICAL DISCUSSION ON USING SPORT AS A REHABILITATION TOOL FOR CONFLICT AFFECTED CHILDREN**

**Speakers: Bob Henley, PhD and Simon Oucul, MA**

**Discussant: Professor Louk de la Rive Box**

**THE NORTHERN UGANDA EXPERIENCE: SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT**

**BY SIMON OUCUL, MA**

Simon Oucul has a Master of Arts degree in Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies and a degree in Political science and Geography (Makerere University Kampala). He has worked with several organisations in both conflict and post-conflict areas, e.g. HealthNeed Uganda, UNFAO, USAID, War Child and Wereldkinderen. Since 2007 Simon Oucul works as a programme Manager for Right To Play in Uganda. He is responsible for planning effective implementation of programmes, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, resource mobilisation and management of project staff.



### **Education is central but sport and play are an essential first step**

An increasing number of children and communities are affected by conflict. Simon Oucul stressed that rehabilitation is needed to heal the invisible psychological and social wounds that affect young people. Mr. Oucul agreed with Kon Kelei: education is central to the rehabilitation process, yet it is crucial for youth to first 'empty their minds' which are full of memories of war and violence. To achieve this, children need to slowly dissociate from their previous traumatic rules of engagement. Sport and play are key instruments in this process.

### **Two types of conflict in Uganda with devastating effects**

The Lango sub-region in Uganda has witnessed two types of conflict: the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) orchestrated violence for the last twenty years and Karimojong armed cattle raiding for the last five decades. As a result, people were forced into camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's). Civil institutions stopped functioning and critical health and education systems broke down. Disease and epidemics roared. Violence and criminality became widespread and countless children were orphaned.

Many children and young people dropped out of school for various reasons: to support parents searching for food, fear of being abducted by the LRA or of being killed in the crossfire between the LRA and the government. School was no longer meaningful in this violent context.

### **Develop interventions in cooperation with stakeholders, communities and schools**

Right To Play established a project office in Uganda, organized stakeholder meetings and conducted a baseline survey. Schools and communities were selected to initiate sport and play activities. Teachers and community volunteers were trained and supplied with sports materials. Communities were sensitized on the importance of sport and play for the rehabilitation of young people. As a result, children participated in sporting activities in the evenings at rehabilitated play spaces in schools.

### **Impressive results show behaviour improved and school participation increased**

Sport in schools has boosted teacher-child and child-child interactions, socialization and learning. Formerly abducted children who felt isolated and rejected now play freely with other children, which has supported their re-integration into the community. Right to Play has observed more respect among children; reduced aggression and happier children overall.

### **Increase understanding and fundamentals remains a challenge**

There is little understanding among policy makers on the role of sports in peace and development. Sport should not be a stand-alone factor. However, in most countries, policies using sport as a peace and rehabilitation tool are virtually non-existent. In effect, funding to support Sports for Development and Peace is limited and activities are often ad hoc. Demand for sports activities is high; available resources are low. Often, there is more emphasis on competitive sports than sports as a learning or peace tool. Sport and play activities aimed at rehabilitation should focus on values and messages like respect and unity. Attracting community volunteers to consistently implement sport and play activities is another challenge to be faced.

### **How to proceed? Advocacy is the key to locked doors!**

Simon Oucul stressed that advocacy for further progression of the field is needed at various levels. Research on the effects of Sport for Development and Peace needs to be conducted and results communicated. Global partnerships need to be improved. Organisations in the field need to join forces and answer questions like: How do we bring our governments and politicians on board? How can we generate local support for sports activities?

Together, we can initiate publicity showcasing the potential of sports to rehabilitate children and youth affected by conflict. Mr. Oucul concluded that there is a need to train more Sport for Development and Peace ambassadors who mobilize support, capacity and resources. Finally, he expressed hope that the conference's follow-up activities can provide building blocks for this purpose.

**PSYCHOSOCIAL SPORT & PLAY PROGRAMMES: BUFFERING THE EFFECTS OF CONFLICT & DISASTER THROUGH ENHANCING RESILIENCE****BY BOB HENLEY, PHD**

Bob Henley is senior researcher at the Swiss Tropical Institute and a psychologist with a focus on resilience processes in children and youth. His professional activities include helping advance the development of resilience concepts and assessment tools with the NCCR (National Centre of Competence in Research North-South; research area: Vulnerability & Resilience), executing research with a focus on resilience processes in children and youth and consultant on implementing resilience practices in NGOs in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda.

**What makes the difference?**

Bob Henley posed central questions regarding rehabilitation after severely stressful or traumatic events: *Why do some people overcome traumatic or severely stressful life events easier or more quickly than others? Why do some people seem to be unaffected, or even become stronger after stressful life events? Is this something that can be taught? And can structured sports & play activities help do this?* Even though empirical scientific evidence is still rare; Henley presented research findings that support that this probably is the case.



### Resilience might be key

A key influence helping victims to overcome trauma may be resilience. What is resilience?

- Definition from physics: *The power or ability to return to the original form, position, etc., after being bent, stretched or compressed; elasticity (e.g. bridges).*
- Definition from developmental psychology: *A dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity. Implicit within this notion are two critical conditions:*
  - An exposure to significant threat or severe adversity.
  - The achievement of positive adaptation despite major assaults on the developmental process (Luthar 2000).

### Factors which enhance resilience

What enhances the development of resilience? Over thirty years of research has identified several key protective-enabling factors. First of all, healthy attachments with family; close relationships with non-family adults (e.g., teachers, coaches, mentors) and healthy peer relationships are important. Secondly, involvement with and contributions to the community proves crucial. And last but not least, learning effective problem solving and coping strategies that assist with adaptation is an important element.

### Well designed sport and play programmes provide protective factors

Bob Henley poses a hypothesis: **structured sport and play programmes provide protective factors that enhance resilience.** What is needed is an interactive and supportive peer environment with structured support and adult guidance. Coaches, teachers and mentors who can bond with children, and who can teach coping skills and problem-solving strategies are crucial. A focus on building community awareness, attachment and cohesion is key. Children's psychological, social and behavioural strengths can thus be gently supported in a play setting. In psychosocial sport programmes winning is not the focus; healing is.

### Evidence shows: resilience can be enhanced

Bob Henley presented the Beslan Resilience Study, research he helped to develop and conduct with Swiss and North Ossetian research teams on the 2004 Beslan school siege, hostage and bombing tragedy in North Ossetia (more information on this at: [www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/conflict-peace](http://www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/conflict-peace)).

The study showed the impressive effects of a one week intensive outdoor sport and play programme, suggesting that children who have experienced significant

traumatic events, can still have their resilience enhanced via participation in sport and play activities (mountaineering, climbing, first aid training and camping activities). Even two years after the traumatic event, this short-term intensive activities programme resulted in enhanced resilience in children. Children not only showed improved resilience by the end of the programme, but also reported continued improvement in resilience levels six months later. These programmes were led by caring adults with close ties to the children, who encouraged healthy peer interaction, taught coping skills and problem-solving strategies, and promoted connection with and commitment to a community; all key factors for rehabilitation.

***Rehabilitation implies the formation of healthy relationships, ties to the community and the expansion of coping skills to overcome shock and trauma.***

### **Potential limitations**

There are also limitations of resilience-based psychosocial programmes to consider. Not all children may benefit from involvement in these programmes, as some may have high resilience already and not improve significantly - although they may help contribute to the resilience of other children by their presence. Furthermore, psychosocial programmes may not be able to manage children with more acute psychological, social or behavioural problems - these children will require more intensive individual care. And lastly, since research on resilience has thus far occurred in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, there is much to be learned about possible similarities and differences in resilience processes for youth in culturally different contexts (where most relief and development programmes are now occurring).

### **Closing conclusion: how to proceed?**

More empirical research on community-based, resilience-focused sport and play practices are needed. We need to identify the best resilience enhancement practices that can be shared with other psychosocial, mental health and education professionals. Unfortunately, when research does occur, experiences and findings are often not shared. New and stronger insights on resilience are needed so that more organisations can integrate these practices into programmes for vulnerable children and youth. After implementation, the logical next step is to build in programme assessment structures before the programme starts, so we can further our knowledge about best practices in enhancing resilience in young people.

04 BEFORE THE STARTING GUN //



**A CRITICAL DISCUSSION ON PREVENTING CHILD SOLDIERS' RECRUITMENT****Speakers: Mario Gómez and Karen Doubilet, MA****Discussant: Associate Professor Karin Arts****PREVENTION OF RECRUITMENT AND UTILIZATION OF CHILDREN BY ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS IN COLOMBIA****BY MARIO GÓMEZ**

Since 2001, Mario Gómez has been the Director of Social Projects and Human Rights of the Antonio Restrepo Barco Foundation, a Non-Governmental Organisation with consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Mr. Gómez's work promotes Human Rights and social development in Colombia through projects and by following up and monitoring public policies, in particular those relating to children and youth. The foundation designs and implements, among others, programmes for the prevention of recruitment of children by illegal armed group in the Montes de María Zone – Colombia.



## **Introduction**

Mario Gómez discussed the Colombian policy to prevent child recruitment in armed conflicts. According to the Colombian ombudsman, more than eight thousand children are enrolled in armed groups. Main recruiters of child soldiers are the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ENL) and the widespread paramilitary groups. It is mandatory to the State to promote prevention policies to avoid the violation of rights leading to recruitment. Because Colombia finally recognised this important fact, almost four thousand of the recruited children are now in the special government rehabilitation programme run by the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare.

## **Prevention strategy in Colombia: start with the causes**

Colombia has developed an intersectoral policy for the prevention of child recruitment. Research showed that 85% of children become part of the guerrillas 'voluntarily'. School desertion, low employment and violence in the family prevail. It was clear that government and NGOs needed to promote the participation of children in activities and revitalize social and private networks. Children need to be offered alternative education, recreation and sports activities. Problematic families should be supported: fifteen percent of boys and twenty five percent of the girls state that violence and lack of affection within their families were determining facts to enrol in armed groups. Also needed are economic solutions to address the fact that thirty five percent of child soldiers indicated that the salaries offered by armed groups were the reason why they joined.

## **Model of intervention: identify risks and involve the local government and community**

Mario Gómez explained a special model aimed at developing social capital that involves the local community. As a first step, identify risk factors: the number of illegal groups in the region, the level of domestic violence, the availability of education and access to places to play. Secondly, revitalise the participation of local governments in the area. This is necessary because an emerging pervasive phenomenon in Colombia is the 'parapolitica'. This refers to the capture of governments, congressmen and other authorities by paramilitary groups.

## **Identify and develop protector factors**

Besides risk factors, protective factors need to be identified. Improving the quality of life of children and strengthening social ties are leading strategies in the prevention of recruitment. Examples include participation in musical groups and sports, development of community activities and social networks, family integration, jobs

and income generation by parents and caretakers and the promotion of social programmes by institutions.

A distinct element is the establishment - with support from the government - of a multipurpose fund to which the community is entitled. The local community chooses which projects will be funded and which are not. In this way, the process is like a contest and commitment is built bottom-up. Mr. Gómez stressed that it is crucial to motivate and support families and their children in the realisation of their rights.

### **Lessons learned: trust is the first step – improving the quality of life is the second step**

The conflict has devastated Colombia for forty years; only for the last few years has the government worked on a solution. Therefore it is crucial to stimulate local government credibility. A major problem is that nobody trusts anybody anymore. It is important to involve the children and community in the design and implementation of projects. This not only builds trust but also increases commitment with programmes goals and activities. Trust and hope among the population are key elements of the solution.

When first heard, the fact that children join armed forces 'voluntarily' is shocking. Thinking about the causes, one realizes that it is a more or less a rational choice because alternatives do not exist. It is only logical.

Working on protective factors, offering attractive activities and building the social fabric are crucial to success. Simply said, if children have a guitar and are a member of a music school or participate on a football team, they can spend their time after school in a constructive way. If they come home to a welcoming family, again much has been won. Offering alternative activities and working on better social circumstances can prevent human rights violations. Sport for development and peace offers instruments of great potential to achieve these goals and should be used in combination with the other protector factors.

## BY KAREN DOUBILET, MA

Since 2006, Karen Doubilet has been the Managing Director of PeacePlayers International - Middle East. Mrs. Doubilet has numerous years of academic and field experience in the area of cross-cultural facilitation, Arab-Jewish relations, Palestinian – Israeli relations, and in particular in the development and evaluation of integration programmes. Karen holds an MA in Conflict Management and is currently a doctoral candidate. Over the past year, she and her colleagues have developed a groundbreaking curriculum that teaches conflict resolution on the basketball court.



### Shift of attitudes

Not unlike Colombia, the Middle East faces a particular situation: violence has been present on a permanent basis for several decades now. It is not a post-conflict but rather a situation of constant unfolding conflict. In the 1990s, during the Oslo Peace Agreement process, the negotiators stated that governments should invest in modifying attitudes, resulting in a bottom-up transformation. It is clear that peace agreements alone do not do the job. Karen Doubilet embraced the idea that a fundamental shift in the attitudes of both sides is necessary to support political solutions. She pointed out that the micro- and macro-levels are interdependent; change can best be ignited from the micro level with a people-to-people (P2P) strategy.

### **How to bridge opposing groups? Contact theory provides guidelines**

Bringing opposing groups together under certain conditions can be an effective way to promote positive attitude change, suggested by social psychologist Gordon Allport already in 1954 (*The Nature of Prejudice*). According to a consensus of scholars, conditions necessary for positive contact are: status symmetry; friendship potential; frequent and long-term interaction; intimate interaction; the mutual pursuit of a super-ordinate goal and institutional support.

### **Another building block to resolve the heart of the conflict**

The book '*The Anatomy of Peace*' (Arbinger Institute, 2006) examines the ways that people create more restrictive mindsets that block their ability to be truthful with themselves and effective with others. These mindsets cause people to justify their thoughts and actions by blaming others and seeing conflicts as someone else's fault - as hostile situations in which they alone are right and others are wrong.

The authors call this self-deception or self-betrayal. Unless this mindset is broken, people end up provoking the very problems they think they are trying to solve. Whether it is within the family, business, community, or on the world stage, conflicts escalate until they spin out of control.

The book provides a tool for solving intergroup and interpersonal conflict. The goal is to create a safe space in which people can begin to see the humanity in others. Karen Doubilet illustrated how these guiding principles are delivered on the basketball court through drills and storytelling. A lexicon is provided to communicate and develop as a player and a team.

### **Two programmes linking communities and developing life skills**

The Twinned Basketball Programme provides training in communities twice a week, organises intercommunity activities and matches. These activities provide a framework for positive interaction through the mutual pursuit of a super-ordinate goal on the basketball court. However, experience shows it takes a long time to get the two communities to act together.

The Leadership and Development Programme provides opportunities to participate in developing programmes and activities and to be trained as a coach. This includes preparation and subsidies for coaching certification volunteer opportunities, continued competition on an integrated team and social action projects. This constitutes a leadership pipeline, whereby youth continue their work as coaches and leaders in the programme.



### **Main challenge: no quick wins, it concerns long-term processes**

Major challenges have to be faced when bringing sports for development to communities in an ongoing conflict. Segregation in society and cultural institutions is a strong barrier. Some particular groups are weaker so there can be asymmetries. Yet it is symmetry that is one of the conditions for positive contact. Furthermore, in the Middle East there is a lack of social norms that favour equality: there exists covert and overt discrimination. For instance, in some communities, girls are not allowed to go out of the house alone.

An important question remains: are we truly changing the attitudes and behaviours of the participants towards the other side? The programmes of Peace Players International are transforming its participants and their communities one child at a time. Karen Doubilet concludes that to achieve the desired societal change, long-term processes, patience and stamina are needed.

05 WHO GETS TO PLAY?



**Speakers: Felicite Rwemalika and Panos Manoglou**

**Discussant: Chantelle de Nobrega, MA**

**SPORT AS A TOOL FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY AND EMPOWERING GIRLS AND WOMEN**

## BY FELICITE RWEMALIKA

Mrs. Felicite Rwemalika is the Executive Director and founder of the Association of Kigali Women in Sport (AKWOS). She initiated women's football in Rwanda. In 2007, she was elected as the first Commissioner of women's football at the Rwanda National Football Federation level. Prior to this, Mrs. Rwemalika worked for several years as the Director of Rwanda Women Inter-association Study and Assessment (RWISA), the first research programme on the effects of ARV drugs on women and the assessment of effects of trauma in women.



### **Rwandan genocide: how do we overcome trauma and reach reconciliation?**

The Rwandan Genocide in 1994 left many girls and women traumatized as victims of violence with no self-confidence. Mrs. Rwemalika noticed that sport for men resulted in higher self-esteem, hope, social inclusion, empowerment and team spirit. Why would this not be true for women? From that time she has been a pioneer for sport development and peace in Rwanda through her efforts to create

an organisation using sport as a dynamic tool for both promoting gender equity and empowering girls and women. Association of Kigali Women in Sport (AKWOS) aims to boost Rwandan girls' and women's self-confidence and self-esteem and helps them to overcome trauma, depression and stress. Furthermore, programmes are targeted to reduce gender based violence and HIV/AIDS; to promote social and economic rights, peace and security and to promote unity and reconciliation.

### **Cultural barriers for women's participation in sport**

Sport is an integral part of the culture of every nation, however, its use to promote gender equity is often overlooked because it is not readily perceived as a suitable or desired pursuit for girls and women. Despite the horrible effects of the 1994 genocide, Rwandan culture prevented girls and women from practicing sports. According to prevailing beliefs, women should focus on reproductive and house hold activities. This is indicative of how existing social constructions of masculinity and femininity play a key role in determining access, levels of participation, and benefits from sport.

### **Recommended strategy: take time to mobilise social support**

It took two years to convince and have mothers mobilized. Finally, AKWOS got a breakthrough and started getting more players. The first football team was named Urumuli which means Light, referring to the courage of these girls. AKWOS organized local matches to encourage women to play. Mrs. Rwemalika launched a tournament in which the First Lady participated, an event that helped to break cultural barriers and to initiate social change. Inviting the daughters of high officials to take part in activities and creating media interest, proved to be an effective strategy.

Since then, AKWOS has grown and is recognized by FERWAF (National Rwanda Football Federation). Besides football, AKWOS now mobilises, trains, develops and sustains several women sports right from the grassroots: volleyball, basketball, swimming, athletics, tennis, karate and sport for women with disability in Rwanda.

### **Effects are promising: many girls and women participate**

By giving girls and women opportunities to learn new skills, to develop positive relationships, engage in volunteer service and to receive public recognition, self-esteem is fostered. Women have a voice in AKWOS programme design and decision-making. Participants receive training and have opportunities for leadership and advocacy. As an effect, sport programmes empower girls and women and equip them to take greater control over their own lives.

Sport programmes provide women with safe places to gather, to build social networks, and connect them to health, education and employment information. Furthermore, sport programmes cause gender norms to become less restrictive and offer women greater mobility, access to public spaces, and a broader variety of opportunities for their physical, intellectual and social development.

### Long-term support remains challenge

Despite the many successes, the journey continues. There are still many barriers in Rwanda for women to participate in sports: political constraints, social-cultural constraints, infrastructural barriers and economic constraints. Mrs. Rwemalika stressed the importance of the recognition of sport's benefits in national sport policies. It was an important milestone for AKWOS when the government decided to support the organisation.

Nevertheless, legislation, policies and funding for sport programmes remain a challenge. Women and girls involvement in policy development for sport and the planning of sport initiatives is still low. There is a need for programmes aimed at promoting female participation in sport. Addressing gender stereotypes, inequity and discrimination also remains a focal point for AKWOS. Often, change is sparked by offering a supportive environment for women as a first step.

### Let's join forces

Felicite Rwemalika concluded by inviting the audience to join forces and to develop effective sport programmes to meet the specific needs of girls and women in order to work towards increased and sustainable participation.

## APPROACHING THE GENDER ISSUE IN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES

### BY PANOS MANOLOGLOU

Since 2006, Mr. Panos Manologlou has been a member of the streetfootballworld team based in Berlin, Germany where he is the know-how manager of the streetfootballworld network. Streetfootballworld is a social profit organisation that promotes positive change through football. Founded in 2002, the non-governmental organisation (NGO) is a leading contributor to the field of development through football and continues to work towards social change on a global scale.



### **Strategy: Fair Play Football creates a culture for inclusion and learning**

How can we increase girls participation in sport? Streetfootballworld developed a new approach called Fair Play Football. It started in Colombia with out-of-school youth and was introduced to Germany five years ago as 'Strassenfussball für Toleranz'.

All teams must be of mixed gender. There are no referees; just mediators or 'teamers'. Players must decide on the rules of the match and then stick to them. Due to some advantages for teams when girls are playing, Fair Play Football strives to promote female participation. Two girls from each team always have to be on the pitch during the match. For example, some optional rules include, a girl has to score for a boy's goals to count or a girl's goal counts for double. Fair Play Football has much in common with social learning: treat – and being treated – fairly.

Due to its success Fair Play Football was introduced to a wider audience during the streetfootballworld festival in 2006.

### **Peer education programmes prove effective in Kenya**

Moving the Goal Posts Kilifi (MTGK) is a girl's youth Sports and Development organisation in Kilifi on the coast of Kenya in East Africa. MTGK was set up as a Sport and Development Programme in 2001 and now has close to three thousand girl football players.

MTGK promotes football excellence, youth leadership, reproductive health rights and economic empowerment to help girls and young women escape the cycle of poverty. Kilifi district is in one the least developed district in Kenya. MTGK seeks to empower girls through football. Girls are encouraged to take up leadership roles and to develop their life skills through playing, coaching, refereeing and managing football activities. Additionally, there is an extensive peer led health education programme in which trained peer educators give their teams information about reproductive health, HIV & AIDS and girls' rights.

It is easier to learn from girls the same age who have experienced similar problems because this gives hope. By taking responsibility, girls and women develop essential and transferable skills such as self-confidence, leadership and negotiation. This is reflected in the following practical ways. Competitions and matches are organised by girls who have been chosen by their team as representatives to all-girl committees. All referees and first aid workers are girls. All staff members are women; four out of five of them play football and three out of four are girls from the target group. The monitoring and evaluation team is composed entirely of girls. All coaches are

girls. Last but not least, girls are involved in formulating annual plans and long-term strategies.

### **What are the key ingredients for a successful sports and gender project?**

One factor is extremely important: the community needs to be mobilised and involved. The players and the community should assume part of the responsibility for managing the project, including organising tournaments. All players need to be committed and girls are to be involved in all facets of the project, not just participation in sport activities.

Serious pitfalls include inadequate financing and negative cultural and religious values regarding gender empowerment. Finally, it is important to aim for transparency and accountability.



## // 06 WHAT'S NEXT? CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS





## FACILITATED BY PROFESSOR LOUK DE LA RIVE BOX

Louk de la Rive Box is Professor of International Cooperation and rector at the ISS, honorary professor of international co-operation at Maastricht University, member of Sussex University's STEPS Advisory Board and of the World Connectors, board member of the international journal Global Governance and The Broker, and director of the Graduate Institute for International Relations and Development Studies (IHEID).



In the closing discussion, participants exchanged ideas and formulated recommendations.

Louk de la Rive Box first thanked the contributors, speakers and participants for their valuable input and constructive dialogue. Central questions which remain, are:

***What's next? How do we ensure that organisations in the field can implement the lessons learned? What's needed to be successful and to unleash the potential of sport and play for the prevention and rehabilitation of child soldiers?***

Louk de la Rive Box reminded the audience of the moderate approach which Professor Pronk promoted. Be aware of the pitfall to overestimate the power of sport and play. Other interventions are needed simultaneously to change the world; sport alone cannot do miracles. Organisations active in the field are sometimes too enthusiastic, too ambitious and sometimes unrealistic about expected social

change from isolated sport and play interventions. These interventions need to be aligned with other actions aimed at building social fabric and improving quality of life. Organisations need to take this into account when designing programmes and projects.

### **SPORT AND PLAY ARE KEY CONCEPTS BUT DO NOT STAND ALONE**

The contributions illustrated that it is still not evident in this world that children have the freedom to play. Playfulness implies room for a world of one's own making. For many children affected by conflict, they have lost their sense of autonomy and are used to an imposed world where power is everything.

For traumatised children who are emotionally and cognitively affected by horrific memories, sport and play has proved an effective way to, in the words of Kon Kelei, 'empty their heads' of trauma. Former child soldiers Kon Kelei and Simon Oucul stressed that talking about your own terrible experiences is counterproductive. This conclusion is now backed up by scientific psychological research on how to overcome trauma and is recognised by many experts in the field. Unfortunately, the 'talk-about-it-approach' is still common for many NGOs working in pre- and post conflict areas. Important recommendation of the conference: use sport and play to support children and youth who are dealing with the effects of their traumatic experiences, strengthen resilience and initiate rehabilitation alongside broader rehabilitation and reintegration interventions.

### **DEVELOPMENT STARTS WITH A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH**

People are at the centre of concerns when social change is targeted. A rights-based approach to development is a conceptual framework that is normatively based on international human rights standards. Following a rights-based approach prevents overestimating the power of sport and play. It forces programme and project managers to take a broad and integrated perspective and roots interventions in internationally recognised value systems. This leads to greater normative clarity and detail. Treaty bodies and human rights declarations define the content of development, including requirements of health, education, housing and governance. There are public and readily accessible tools available describing the institutional and developmental requirements of rights. This results in an easier consensus, increased transparency and less 'political baggage'. Development objectives, indicators and plans can be based on universal standards of international human rights instruments rather than on imported foreign models, prescriptive solutions, partisan approaches or arbitrary policies (UNHCR, 2009).

## BUILD CAPACITY AND TRAIN NGOS

Much can be learned from mistakes and successes of the past. However, best practices are often not shared; bad practices are virtually never shared: the ones involved prefer to keep their 'failure' behind closed doors. This explains for instance why the 'talk-about-it-approach' remains common even though it has proven to be detrimental.

Participants state that NGOs need to be empowered and supported in developing capacities in this relatively new field. They have a need for trainings, workshops and seminars to acquire new knowledge, skills, methods and instruments.

## DEVELOP AND FIELD TEST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

Sport and play in pre-and post-conflict areas is a complex subject that needs to be approached with great care. It is important to include recommendations from the conference's participants. Examples of strategies that have proved effective can be a useful guide in developing programmes. New strategies need to be developed and field-tested on a small scale. Pilot projects should be launched and approaches and results made transparent so everybody can benefit from the lessons learned.

## CONNECT AND STAY CONNECTED

Several academic fields have valuable scientific knowledge and methods which apply to sport and development for peace. Conflict management; reconciliation; trauma; sport; ethnic divides; negotiation; anthropology; psychology, sociology, law, development cooperation; nation building: all these separate realms of expertise are needed to prevent and tackle the effects of conflicts. Unfortunately, the merging of knowledge to focus on sport in post-conflict areas is still rare. Participants would like to actively stimulate the exchange of models and theories so they can be tested in practice.

## IT IS TIME FOR SYNERGY AND SHARING

NGOs are often not willing to share their expertise: this is a main barrier for cooperation. To prevent reinventing the wheel and making the same mistakes over and over, this obstacle needs to be taken down. Collaboration and sharing the secrets of success will lead to synergy. Only in this way is improvement within reach and the quality of sport and play interventions can be increased. As the participants recommended:

***"Share your best and your worst experiences!"***

## DEVELOP 'FUN ACTIVITIES'

Sometimes, programme designers and facilitators forget one very important aspect: activities should be fun. Programmes should be designed so that children enjoy, so they will ask: "When can we play again?" This crucial success factor is often overlooked, resulting in activities, which lack stimulation for adequate participation. Recommendations from the participants: successful sport and play interventions should be fun for children and youth:

***"Fun activities implement themselves; energy can be focussed on real issues instead of on getting the children to take part and pay attention."***

## INVOLVE CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM THE START

So what is fun for young people and what is not? Which approaches are effective and which methods should be avoided? It is now clear that sport and play are effective to increase resilience and overcome trauma: it helps youth to release tensions acquire healthy habits and develop positive relationships and create a sense of community. However, there is not a one-size fits all solution. It is now widely recognized that local ownership and participation are crucial for sustainable development of communities. A next step that should be taken according to participants is to make sure children and youth partake in the design and implementation of interventions. Because only they truly know what works and what doesn't, what's fun and what is not.

Without the involvement of children and youth, interventions might be useful but will lack the continuity necessary for a true shift to occur. Commitment of young people and communities is needed to leave behind ad-hoc approaches once and for all and aim for long-term effects, including education, economic and social change. All are needed to construct a sustainable brighter future for children and youth who suffer from the effects of traumatic experiences.

## DEVELOP A PLATFORM TO COLLECT AND DISSEMINATE KNOWLEDGE

A final recommendation of the conference is to develop a platform to collect, exchange and disseminate knowledge and best practices in the field of sport and play for traumatised youth and children. Participants agreed: we must move

forward, use proven methods and we must progress beyond competition and towards cooperation and mutual capacity building:

***“Together we are strong.”***

There is a need for organisations in the field will set up a taskforce dedicated to the collection and dissemination of knowledge and experiences.

### **CLOSING WISH**

Louk de la Rive Box closed the conference expressing his hope that next steps will be taken to implement the conference’s recommendations and to jointly take the field of Sport for Development and Peace to a higher level.



**Presentations available online**

This report provides a summary of the conference More than Child's Play. Download this report and all presentations on: [www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/conflict-peace](http://www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/conflict-peace)

With special thanks to the organisers of the conference, the experts and participants for their valuable input!

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The Antonio Restrepo Barco Foundation is a non-governmental organization with consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This NGO promotes Human Rights and social development in Colombia, through projects and by following up and monitoring public policies, in particular those relating to childhood and youth. The foundation designs and implements among others programmes for the prevention of the illegal recruitment of children by illegal armed groups in the Montes de María Zone – Colombia.

### **Hivos**

Hivos is a Dutch non-governmental organisation guided by humanist values. A fair, free and sustainable world – that is what Hivos, the Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation, wants to contribute to. Together with local organisations in developing countries, Hivos strives for a world in which all citizens – both men and women – have equal access to resources and opportunities for development.

### **NCDO (Dutch National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development)**

NCDO strengthens and highlights public support for international cooperation and sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. NCDO's sports programme is the Dutch knowledge and information centre on the power of sport to help reach these goals and social change.

### **PeacePlayers International**

PeacePlayers International (PPI) is an innovative global organization that uses sport to unite and educate young people in divided communities. PeacePlayers International was founded in 2001, on the premise that "children who play together can learn to live together". PPI currently operates programmes in Northern Ireland, South Africa, Cyprus, and the Middle East that bring together

thousands of children to form positive relationships, develop leadership skills, and improve their futures. Over the past six years, the organization has worked with over 45,000 children.

### **Right to Play**

Right To Play is an international humanitarian organization that uses sport and play programmes to improve health, develop life skills, and foster peace for children and communities in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world. Working in both the humanitarian and development context, Right To Play trains local community leaders as coaches to deliver its programmes in countries affected by war, poverty, and disease in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and South America.

### **streetfootballworld**

streetfootballworld is a social profit organisation that promotes positive change through football. Founded in 2002, streetfootballworld is a leading contributor to the field of Development through Football and continues to work towards social change on a global scale. A cornerstone of streetfootballworld's work is the streetfootballworld network, which connects over seventy organisations worldwide that use the world's most popular sport to address issues such as children's rights and education, anti-discrimination and social integration, the environment, health, and peacebuilding.

### **War Child**

War Child believes that sound psychosocial conditions for children and youth and respect of the rights of children are a prerequisite to being able to create a peaceful society. War Child's goal is to empower children and young people in war-affected areas through community-based programmes. These programmes enhance the respect for children's rights and strengthen children's and young people's psychosocial development through education, child protection and psychosocial support. The use of creative arts, sports and participation is key in the War Child approach.

### **Women Win**

Women Win is the first ever international women's fund that supports sport and physical activities as instruments for social change and women's empowerment. Women Win believes that sport is the way for women and girls to learn leadership skills, develop character, self-esteem and a sense of belonging, while at the same time discover the fun, support and power of being together. Women Win supports innovative and sustainable sport programmes to empower girls and women and advocates for and create a social movement around sport for gender equity.



women**WIN**

