INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ACADEMY

Olympic Diplomacy: How can Olympic Sports play a positive role in International Diplomacy?

59th INTERNATIONAL SESSION
FOR YOUNG PARTICIPANTS

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FOR YOUNG PARTICIPANTS

1 – 15 JUNE 2019

Editor
KONSTANTINOS GEORGIADIS
Professor, University of Peloponnese
Honorary Dean of the IOA

ANCIENT OLYMPIA

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"The objective of the International Olympic Academy is to preserve this precious Greek heritage and promote the Olympic spirit in our world today. It acts in many ways as the academic pillar of the Olympic Movement, implementing the educational and social principles of Olympism. In this way, the International Olympic Academy helps and supports the IOC to better pursue our overarching mission to put sport at the service of humanity."

Dr Thomas BACH, IOC President,
Extract from his Address at the Opening Ceremony
of the 59th International Session for Young Participants
Hill of Pnyx, 2 June 2019

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FOREWORD

The works of the International Olympic Academy's 59th Session for Young Participants began with the warm welcome by the President of the IOA at the opening ceremony at the hill of Pnyx, the birthplace of Democracy.

In the presence of His Excellency Prokopios Pavlopoulos, President of the Hellenic Republic, who declared the opening of the Session, as well as the President of the International Olympic Committee, Dr Thomas Bach, the honorary distinction "OLYMPIA" was awarded to the double gold Olympic medalist Valeriy Borzov, member of the IOC, for his contribution to Olympic education and the dissemination of the Olympic values as well as the honorary distinction "ATHENA" to the Chinese Taipei Olympic Academy for its educational work and the promotion of Olympism. In his excellent speech, IOC President Dr Bach analysed why we need the Olympic ideal today more than ever before.

The guests were greeted by the President of the Hellenic Olympic Committee Mr Spyros Capralos, who was elected IOC member in June 2019 at the IOC Session in Lausanne.

The works of the Session in ancient Olympia began with the inspirational speech of Mr George Papandreou on the subject of the Olympic Truce. The former prime minister of Greece filled the audience with enthusiasm and received a warm response from the participants.

The distinguished professors-lecturers of the Session Dr J. Simon Rofe (GBR), Dr Dionyssis Gangas (GRE), Mr Yves Le Lostecque (FRA), Dr Beatriz Garcia (ESP), Dr Gelly Aroni (GRE), Dr Konstantinos Georgiadis (GRE), Dr Ian Brittain (GBR) and Dr Benu Gupta (IND) analysed and covered many aspects of the special subject of the Session.

The works marked great success both in terms of the academic part and in the other events. Fourteen athletes who participated in Olympic Games and in particular Mr Grant Nel (AUS), Ms Melissa Ingram (NZL), Ms Lijia Xu (CHN), Mr Oluseyi Smith (CAN), Ms Hrafnhildur Luthersdottir (ISL), Ms Nikol Kučerovâ (CZE), Ms Noam Mills (ISR), Mr Aliaž Sedej (SLO), Ms Samantha Wells (AUS), Ms Mariya Koroleva (USA), Mr Hilal HILAL (TAN), Ms Valentina Marchei (ITA), Mr Jeremy Maillefer (SUI) and Ms Ekaterina VOLKOVA (FIN) shared their wonderful experiences with the participants of the Session. The large number of participants (fourteen) at the Session who had taken part in Olympic Games was especially encouraging. Also, a group of students from Sri Lanka presented "A

Youth Debate Programme on Olympic Education Values" which was launched by the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka in collaboration with the IOC.

The International Session for Young Participants is a workshop of Olympism. The participants take part in organised sports events, track and field, basketball, football, volleyball, table tennis, swimming gala etc.

The fine arts, poetry, dance and music workshops were also successfully organised. The wonderful creations of the participants will be presented at the respective report by the group coordinators and all the activities of the participants were also presented at a joint event with the Fine Arts and Arts Happening workshop, an event that was particularly well-received by the Session participants.

The social evenings of the Session were organised by 40 different groups, enriching the programme of the Session with interesting cultural activities from around the world.

The eleven discussion groups, one French-speaking and ten English-speaking, discussed topics and questions that they selected themselves and presented the conclusions of the discussion groups at two different cycles. Their discussions focused mainly on issues such as the relation between sport and peace, to what extent the Olympic Games can promote peace, how Olympic athletes can become ambassadors of the Olympic Truce, how the IOC could empower Olympic athletes to become diplomats of the Olympic Movement etc.

The Session participants attended high-level academic lectures, participated in multicultural groups and discussed the specific topics of the lectures while at the same time experiencing the Olympic ideal through educational, cultural and sports activities.

The session is organised every year with the help of the Olympic Solidarity of the IOC, which morally and financially supports the events of the IOA.

This year, the IOA facilities are being radically renovated by decision of the IOC executive board and its President Dr Thomas Bach, whom we thank from the bottom of our hearts.

The renovation of the IOA facilities was a vision of its President, Isidoros Kouvelos and all of us who have the honour and joy to experience through its events the wonderful work of the IOA.

The IOA will continue its humanitarian mission and will continue to offer its services to the next generation, to the young people around the world.

Prof. Konstantinos GEORGIADIS
Department of Sports Organisation and Management,
University of Peloponnese
IOA Honorary Dean

Opening Ceremony

Hill of Pnyx, 2 June 2019

ADDRESS
by the President of the International Olympic Academy
Isidoros KOUVELOS

On behalf of the Ephoria of the International Olympic Academy, I once more have the honour to address all young participants attending the Opening Ceremony of the 59th International Session of the International Olympic Academy and to extend to them a warm welcome to Athens and Greece, the mother of Olympic culture.

Allow me, however, to extend a particularly warm welcome to two loyal friends of the International Olympic Academy: Mr Prokopios Pavlopoulos, President of the Hellenic Republic, and Dr Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee. Both have honoured us with their presence today and have expressed repeatedly, not only their support to this great Olympic institution, but also their recognition of its work over the last 59 years.

Ten years have gone by since my first speech in Pnyx, as President of the Academy, and every time I welcome young participants, who have travelled so far to live for a few days surrounded by the beauty of Ancient Olympia and to get to know this sacred land that gave birth to the Olympic Games, I feel equally moved.

The pioneers of the International Olympic Academy chose the Hill of Pnyx as the location for the opening ceremony of each Young Participants' Session for purely symbolic reasons.

As early as 507 BC, Pnyx was used for the popular assemblies of Athens, when the reforms of Cleisthenes transferred political power to its citizens. Here, all the great Athenian politicians, philosophers and orators, including Pericles, Aristides, Demosthenes, stood on this level stone platform to my left, facing the Acropolis and Parthenon, to speak on an equal footing with the other citizens of Athens, in a spirit of democratic coexistence, on matters of politics and philosophy. Which is why, to this day, Pnyx continues to be considered as the true birthplace of Democracy, because on this historic hill Democracy was born.

Warm handshake between the President of the Hellenic Republic, H.E. Mr Prokopios Pavlopoulos and the IOC President, Dr Thomas Bach.

Dear friends,

The Olympic Movement is now at one of its most crucial turning points. The age when success in sports easily fell prey to exploitation, for reasons of political expedience, appears to belong to the past. The International Olympic Committee, since the nineties has started to play an important role in international political developments; in the beginning as a serious interlocutor for the United Nations and later as a decisive player in resolving difficult diplomatic issues. Today, the IOC's role, as a soft power on the international political scene, has been recognised by all.

In 2018, the Olympic Movement proved the power that it has gained, substantiating the above statements. The first effort to normalise political relations between South and North Korea took place in 1988, on the occasion of the Seoul Games and was unsuccessful; it bore fruit, however, 30 years later, with the staging of the PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games. What major international transnational organisations had not managed to do for years was accomplished by the International Olympic Committee, with subtle diplomatic moves on the international political chess board, which received international recognition.

Last February, IOC President, Dr Thomas Bach, who is our guest today, in his speech on the occasion of the anniversary of the opening of the PyeongChang Olympic Games, emphatically welcomed the participation of a joint women's ice hockey team with athletes from North and South Korea, using the following words. "With these powerful symbols in PyeongChang, we saw how the Olympic Games can open the way to dialogue, how the Olympic values can open the way to a more peaceful future. It is our hope that this door to a more

The IOA President, Isidoros Kouvelos addresses the participants and the guests.

peaceful future on the Korean Peninsula will remain open. Sport must continue to build bridges and show what it can do to bring people together".

This major success of the Olympic Movement, which also justified the personal perseverance of President Bach, proved that today, the IOC, as a new soft power in international developments, has the capacity to make policy for governments and not the converse.

As a result of this development, the IOA's Ephoria decided that all its Sessions in 2019 should focus on the IOC's contribution to the cause of global peace.

Thus, the subject chosen for this year's 59th Session for Young Participants is: "Olympic Diplomacy and Peace: How can Olympic sports play a positive role in international diplomacy".

Dear Young Participants,

Tomorrow you will arrive at the IOA premises in Ancient Olympia. You will experience first- hand the magic of that land and various aspects of the ancient and modern history of the Olympic Movement, seeking realistic ways of addressing the problems faced by modern society through the messages relayed by its values.

The International Olympic Academy has been entrusted with the dissemination of Olympic values, which it has been carrying out successfully for almost 60 years, developing Olympic education with all appropriate educational means, at all levels of the Olympic family members.

Times have changed and the motto *Citius – Altius – Fortius*, which the reviver of the Olympic Games promoted in order to put across the importance of physical exercise in particular at the beginning of the previous century, appears to be something relegated to the past!

Perhaps it is time to "re-interpret" Coubertin through the lens of modern developments and the new challenges of our times.

I believe that in this modern, politically fragile world, Olympic education must focus on those challenges and attach importance to how to address them from a practical standpoint. That is why, when addressing modern man, we should supplement *Citius – Altius – Fortius* with the words: "equilibrium", "better", "peaceful", to provide a more modern interpretation of this motto. As only by achieving in total these incitements, someone is enabled to more safely attain the supreme Olympic value of excellence!

Thus, Olympic education will serve as your guide, dear friends from all over the world, to discover Olympic culture through it!

I would like on this occasion to publicly thank our friend, President Bach, not only for the love that he has shown for the International Olympic Academy and the course we have taken in recent years, but also for his personal contribution to the plans to enhance its educational role and to renovate the facilities in Ancient Olympia, through a specific holistic plan that we shortly hope will meet with his final approval.

I would like to bring this address to a close with a quote by Juan Antonio Samaranch concerning Ancient Olympia, where you will spend the next few days.

> *I feel that this is the ideal place to reflect on the evolution of our society. We are in a haven of peace and balance, where centuries remain engraved on the stones, the meanders of the Alpheios river, the beauty of the vegetation and the serenity which pervades this unique place, Olympia, where the sport started on its most glorious and finest course.*

Welcome to the land of Olympic culture!

ADDRESS
by the President of the International Olympic Committee
Dr Thomas BACH

Our gathering here, on the Hill of Pnyx, is a wonderful reminder of two great gifts of the Greek civilisation to the world. This is the birthplace of democracy. This very place where we are standing today, this was where in ancient times, the Athenians came together to discuss, on the basis of democratic principles, the important political issues of the day. It was here where principles, such as equality under the law or the right to speak, were first put into practice. Over 2,500 years later, these same democratic principles continue to define and shape our modern society.

With the inspiring backdrop of the Acropolis, this enduring symbol of ancient Greece, what better place than the Hill of Pnyx to reflect on another great gift of Greek civilisation to all humanity, the Olympic Games.

It was over 3,000 years ago, in Ancient Olympia, that the Olympic Games, this precious gift to humankind, was born. We are grateful to the Greeks to this day. Our admiration for them is even greater, when you realise that these gifts have stood the test of time and still exist in modern society today. It is this wonderful Greek heritage, and this Olympic spirit, that has brought all of us together for this opening ceremony of the International Session for Young Participants of the International Olympic Academy.

We have no better reason than these precious gifts to humanity for thanking the President of the Hellenic Republic, His Excellency Prokopis Pavlopoulos. Your presence here today, Mr President, underlines the unique and important role that Greece plays in the Olympic Movement. We will forever be grateful to Greece and the Greek people for their great contribution to humanity. Mr President, thank you for your unwavering personal support for the Olympic values – values that you yourself have demonstrated on many occasions. Today is one more opportunity to honour the Greek roots of the Olympic Games and

The IOC President, Dr Thomas Bach honored the Ceremony with his presence and addressed the young participants from all over the world.

to deepen the friendship that exists between the International Olympic Committee and the Greek people.

The objective of the International Olympic Academy is to preserve this precious Greek heritage and promote the Olympic spirit in our world today. It acts in many ways as the academic pillar of the Olympic Movement, implementing the educational and social principles of Olympism. In this way, the International Olympic Academy helps and supports the IOC to better pursue our overarching mission to put sport at the service of humanity.

This is why I would like to thank everyone at the IOA for their excellent cooperation over the years. In particular, my thanks go to the President of the International Olympic Academy, Isidoros Kouvelos, and the members of the Ephoria. Under their great leadership, the IOA is laying the intellectual foundation for the Olympic spirit to grow strong.

In our fragile world today, we need this Olympic spirit more than ever before.

Hardly a day goes by without news of rising nationalism, of mistrust and protectionism. In an age of global crises, we are seeing a worrying trend towards more isolation, more separation and less cooperation. Paradoxically, in our digital age, when there are more opportunities for communication than ever before, there is less dialogue and less engagement with people who hold different views.

In a world drifting apart, the Olympic Games stand out as the only event that brings the whole world together in peaceful competition. As the International Olympic Committee celebrates its 125th anniversary this year, the ideals and

values of the Olympic Games, revived by our founder Pierre de Coubertin, are more relevant than ever before.

From the beginning, the Olympic Games were always more than simply a sporting event. When Coubertin revived the Olympic Games, he saw them as a way to promote peace among nations and all people in the world. Always the visionary, he said: "Should the institution of the Olympic Games prosper, it can become a potent factor in securing universal peace."

This mission of the Olympic Games, as a platform to promote peace and understanding, will also be the focus of this IOA Session. The Session's theme of "Olympic Diplomacy and Peace" is of great relevance to the IOC and the whole Olympic Movement because it really goes to the heart of our mission.

Throughout their existence, the Olympic Games have reflected this mission in different ways.

The most recent example of the Coubertin's idea of promoting peace through sport was at the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018. We all remember the inspiring moment from the Opening Ceremony, when the athletes from North and South Korea marched together as one team into the Olympic Stadium, united behind one flag, the Korean Unification Flag.

This moment, of course, did not happen by chance. It was the result of a long process of negotiations and high-level government engagement by the International Olympic Committee that began back in 2014 and lasted until four hours before the Opening Ceremony.

With these powerful symbols and gestures in PyeongChang, we have seen how the Olympic Games can open the way to dialogue, how the Olympic values can open the way to a more peaceful future.

The success of PyeongChang was never a foregone conclusion. In fact, we started the talks with North Korea and support for their athletes already in 2014. Back then we were facing many political obstacles and were not supported by anybody. This went so far that only a few months before the Games, the thought of both Korean teams marching peacefully at the Olympic Games together seemed impossible: we were facing missile launches and nuclear tests on the Korean Peninsula.

But throughout even the most difficult times of political tensions, the IOC always kept the door open for the participation of North Korean athletes in PyeongChang. We did so out of our firm belief in the universality of the Olympic Games. Athletes from all NOCs in the world should participate in the Olympic

Games without any discrimination, regardless of their background. We did so based on our strict commitment to political neutrality. Only this principle of political neutrality ensures that the Olympic Games can stand above and beyond political differences and bring the world together in peaceful competition.

We finally succeeded by having both NOCs, and the governments of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea sign the "Olympic Korean Peninsula Declaration". This provided the solution for the joint march, the use of the Korean Unification Flag and the formation of a unified women's ice hockey team with players from both NOCs.

Both leaders of both countries thanked the IOC afterwards for having opened the door for their peace talks through these actions. Speaking at the UN General Assembly in September 2018, President Moon Jae-in of South Korea highlighted once again the important role the IOC had played in opening the door for the current rapprochement. He said: "The IOC deserves a lot of credit for surprising changes of late by helping North Korea participate in the PyeongChang Winter Olympics."

During my visit to North Korea in March 2018, the country's leader Kim Jong-un said that the Olympic Winter Games had shifted the momentum in North-South Korean relations and that this was "totally attributable to the efforts of the IOC". He also committed that athletes from his country would participate in the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 and the next editions of the Youth Olympic Games.

Both leaders asked the IOC to continue to support the ongoing political peace talks on the Korean Peninsula through sport. The IOC has committed to this and is doing so to this day. Over one year on, we hope for a new momentum in the political dialogue about peace on the Korean Peninsula and beyond.

If the Olympic Games bring together bitter rivals and enemies today, this shows that well over a century since their creation, the idea of promoting a peaceful world through sport continues to have much compelling power in our modern world.

The mission of the Olympic Games to promote a peaceful world also finds its modern-day expression through the Olympic Truce Resolution of the United Nations.

The foundation for the ancient Olympic Games to take place in peace was a sacred truce – the *ekecheiria,* or the Olympic Truce. The *ekecheiria* ensured a halt to hostilities, allowing athletes and spectators to travel safely to Olympia and

home again. In this way, there was already in the ancient times, an inseparable link between the Olympic Games and peace.

Recognising the relevance of the *ekecheiria* in our modern times, the IOC and United Nations have revived this ancient tradition. Since 1994, the UN General Assembly adopts the Olympic Truce resolution before every edition of the Olympic Games, calling on all nations of the world for a cessation of hostilities for the Games to take place in peace.

Most recently, the resolution "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" was adopted ahead of the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018, with a record number of UN Member States co-sponsoring the resolution.

Another example of our mission in action comes from the Olympic Games Barcelona 1992, held in a time when the world was undergoing a period of profound historic change. The Soviet Union had collapsed and the former Soviet republics came to Barcelona as the Unified Team. Personally, it was of course an emotional moment to see the unified German Olympic team enter the Olympic Stadium, made possible by German re-unification just two years earlier. Post-apartheid South Africa returned to the Olympic Games after an absence of 28 years. With Nelson Mandela attending the Opening Ceremony, the message that went from Barcelona to the world was one of peace and friendship and of unity in diversity.

Over the coming days at this Session, you will be discussing these and hopefully many more examples of the power of sport.

We know that sport alone cannot create peace. But by bringing the world together in peaceful competition, the Olympic Games show us what the world could look like, if we were all guided by the Olympic values. In the Olympic Village, the athletes from all 206 National Olympic Committees of the world and the IOC Refugee Olympic Team live together in harmony under one roof. They compete with each other but at the same time, they share their meals, they share their experience, they share their emotions. They are competitors in sport, but they respect each other in victory and defeat. They all have very diverse backgrounds, but they are united by the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. The Olympic athletes show us, that despite all our differences, it is possible for humankind to live together in peace and harmony. In this way, the Olympic Games are an inspiration for peace and understanding

for the world. It is these timeless values that are more relevant in today's world than ever before.

This is why you, the Young Participants, play an important role as well. You represent the future. You are the next generation who will adapt and interpret what the Olympic values mean for you. When you return home after this Session, take this Olympic spirit with you. Remember the lessons from Olympia, from Athens and from the Hill of Pnyx. Share it with others. Carry this wonderful heritage, these precious gifts, democracy and the Olympic Games, into the future.

In this Olympic spirit, I wish all of you fruitful discussions at this Session, and a wonderful stay in Olympia.

ADDRESS
by the President of the Hellenic Olympic Committee
Spyros CAPRALOS

We are at the Hill of the Pnyx, a landmark location for Athens. It is the place where in Ancient Greece, philosophers debated about democracy and the place where your journey in Greece begins!

And what a better way to start your Session than in the presence of the President of the International Olympic Committee and the President of the Hellenic Republic!

Dear friends, during your stay you will have the unique opportunity to engage in discussions about diplomacy in sport, at the very place where the Olympic Games were born, Ancient Olympia, together with your fellow participants literally coming from the four corners of the world!

The Olympic Games were born in Greece but, through the ages, they have become universal. They are a legacy for humanity as a whole.

As for the power of sport to bring people and nations together, I think it is self-evident to all of us. Sport can strengthen relations among nations, but also among communities across regions. It can bridge gaps, mitigate differences, diminish hostilities. It is an efficient tool to conduct diplomacy to the benefit of world peace.

Moreover, diplomacy in sport is deeply rooted in the Olympic Games. The sacred truce, *ekecheiria* as we say in Greek, is the laying down of arms to ensure that athletes and spectators travel safely to the host city. It is the oldest tradition in history to promote peace, dating back in the 8th century BC.

In addition, the Olympic Games is a very special event where all people are equal, where they abide by the same rules and regulations, where they are treated in the same egalitarian way. They are an excellent setting to foster good, healthy relations among all participants, while respecting their diversity.

The importance of diplomacy in sport, its power to promote unity, has been

fully acknowledged by the IOC, which has produced remarkable achievements in this direction. You all remember the team of refugees which participated in the Olympic Games of Rio, while we will also have another team of refugees taking part in the Tokyo Games next year. Moreover, the athletes of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea marching together in the Opening Ceremony in PyeongChang will live long in our memory. At this point let me also add the close and constant cooperation between the IOC and the United Nations.

You, dear friends, the future of Olympism, the future of sport, the modern aspect of the universal Olympic Games, over the next two weeks, you will have the most valuable chance to engage in fruitful discussions on the power of Olympism to unite, at the cradle of the Olympic Games. You will have the opportunity to connect with other nations and cultures over shared sporting experiences. You will thus be able to embrace the Olympic ideals, become excellent ambassadors of Olympism and eventually bring back your valuable experiences to your home countries.

I wish you all a very enjoyable stay in Olympia and a very fruitful outcome to the works of your Session.

HONORARY DISTINCTIONS AWARDING
by the International Olympic Academy

Honorary Distinction "OLYMPIA": to Valeriy BORZOV (UKR)

Honorary Distinction "ATHENA": to the CHINESE TAIPEI OLYMPIC ACADEMY

Valeriy BORZOV

Valeriy Borzov was born on 20 October 1949 in Sambir, a small town of Ukraine. When he was 20 years old, he was already considered to be the top sprinter of his country and one of the best in the world. In the Munich Olympic Games in 1972 he won two gold medals, in 100m. and 200m. and a silver medal in the 4x100-metre relay. In the following Olympic Games, in Montreal in 1976, he won two bronze medals, in 100m. and the 4x100-metre relay. He is a legend in sprinting, having won five Olympic medals and numerous titles in European and world track and field championships, both outdoors and indoors.

In parallel with his outstanding sports career, he studied in the Kiev Institute of Physical Culture and then went on to continue his studies in Pedagogy.

In 1990, Valeriy Borzov became Minister of Youth and Sports in Ukraine, a position that he held until 1997 and in 1998 he was elected as a member to the Ukrainian Parliament up until 2006. In addition, from 1991 to 1998 he was elected President of the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine, whilst from 2006 to the present day he holds the position of NOC Vice President.

He has acted as a member of the Council of the European Athletics Association (1991-1999) and president of the Ukrainian Athletic Federation (1996-2012).

Valeriy Borzov has now served 25 years as a member of the International Olympic Committee. He was a member of the Eligibility Commission (1995-1998) and starting in 1999 was a member of the Culture and Olympic Education Commission for 16 years. Since 2015 he has been a member of the IOC Culture and Olympic Heritage Commission.

He is married with Ludmilla Turischeva, Olympic medallist in gymnastics.

As an athlete, but also through his long standing and systematic involvement in sports administration especially in Olympic education issues, he has always promoted Olympic values through his activity and his attitude to life.

Valeriy Borzov, Olympic Medallist and IOC Member is awarded the IOA prize "Olympia" by the IOA President, Isidoros Kouvelos, after Prof. Konstantinos Georgiadis, IOA Honorary Dean, having read his curriculum vitae.

National Olympic Academy of CHINESE TAIPEI

Following the establishments of the NOAs of Spain, the Republic of Korea and the United States of America, the Chinese Taipei Olympic Academy, the fourth in a row, was founded in 1978 by the late Professor Ming-Hsin Tang, former Secretary General of the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee (CTOC) and Chairman of the CTOC Education Commission.

Inaugurating the first edition in 1978, the Chinese Taipei Olympic Academy Session has been conducted annually for 41 years with the aim of promoting the fundamental principles and values of Olympism. The annual theme of the Session is delivered by several eminent lecturers as in line with the IOA's International Session for Young Participants each year. Over the past few years, the Session has hosted distinguished keynote speakers whose insightful speech sparked animated discussions among participants, while also holding brainstorming panels and workshops.

The Chinese Taipei Olympic Academy received the 2019 prize of the IOA "Athena" through its President, Hong-Dow Lin.

The Greek National Opera's Children's Chorus, under the direction of Ms Konstantina Pitsiakou.

Through the Chinese Taipei Olympic Academy's dedication and hard work, the Session has successfully assembled a total of 4,100 domestic and 90 international participants from Asian countries.

Inaugurated in 2015, the Olympic Education Outreach Programme has been designed to deliver Olympic education and disseminate Olympic values to students with limited access to the Olympic Movement. In each two hour session, the Olympians and elite athletes are invited to encourage high school students to pursue their dreams by setting goals and taking actions. By the end of 2018, Olympic values have been successfully disseminated to 96 schools and more than 9,000 students within the framework of the Chinese Taipei Olympic Movement.

Commemorative photograph of young participants with the IOC President after the end of the Ceremony.

H.E. The President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr Prokopios Pavlopoulos, declared the opening of the 59th International Session for Young Participants.

Opening Ceremony

Ancient Olympia, 4 June 2019

ADDRESS
by the President of the International Olympic Academy
Isidoros KOUVELOS

It is with feelings of emotion and joy that I stand in front of you, a selected group of youngsters from all over the world, in order to welcome you to the International Olympic Academy's premises.

In this truly serene environment, surrounded by sacred ruins and under the secular shadow of the Cronion hill, you will share with us the immortal Olympic idea which was born in this sacred area and you will have the valuable and rare opportunity, inspired by its ancient history, to discuss the problems which confront today Olympism and the Olympic Games.

The Olympic Games have always been a world event. In antiquity in this sacred place were gathered the free peoples from Greece, Macedonia, Thrace, the lands beyond the Danube, the sunbathed islands of the Aegean sea, the rich plains of Ionia and Aeolia in Asia Minor, from the coasts of the East and the fertile land of the Nile, Egypt and Libya and the Greek colonies of Italy, in fact from all the corners of the Greek world which had spread to all the coasts of the sunny Mediterranean sea and which represented at the time practically all the known world.

Today, the international character of the Olympic idea and the Olympic Games gathers more countries than those which are represented at the United Nations.

This clearly shows that the dream of the Baron Pierre de Coubertin to unify through the Olympic Games all the people of the globe, with no discrimination of any kind and under a peaceful spirit, has been realised in our days.

I welcome you, dear friends, to the premises of the International Olympic Academy, the Institution which has been recognised today as the official spiritual and educational centre of world sport.

The Olympic idea has extended national sport to an international level and

provided it with an active, practical and cultural content, so that we can use its principles in an attempt to improve mankind and bring the people of the world together, thus confirming the principle that sports when correctly planned, represent a valuable element of modern civilization.

The aims set by the International Olympic Academy are included in a simple and understandable philosophy, which can easily be accepted by all people.

It is this philosophy that leads to the model of "the good and the worthy" to serve man, humanitarian ideals, sincerity, justice and pure competitive spirit.

Opening address by the IOA President, Isidoros Kouvelos.

This aim will be achieved if, with your warm love, participation and contribution, the Olympic principles and ideals become accessible and understandable to families, schools and institutions of higher education, penetrate the souls of young people who, tomorrow, are going to replace us and take into their strong hands society's fate.

As I mentioned in my speech at Pnyx two days ago, the era in which the Olympic Movement fought for international recognition of its role in international developments is relegated to the past. In the first years following World War II, the IOC silently and emphatically proved that through its moderate positions it could provide solutions, not only to the challenges that abound in the global and complex world of sports, but also challenges that are almost impossible to solve on a political level.

I would like indicatively to remind you of the challenges of the "Two Germanies" in the fifties, as well as those related to "Two Chinas", "Two Koreas", apartheid South Africa and the known case of "Ping-pong diplomacy" in the sixties, seventies and eighties and the recognition of the Olympic Committees in political entities that have not been yet recognised as independent states by the UN in recent political history.

Now the Olympic Movement "imposes" solutions, as a soft power in its own manner, where politics cannot succeed.

We chose this important development of the Olympic Movement as the topic of this year's Session, because we believe that you are of an age to appreciate, analyse, contribute and transmit the positive results of your work.

When after two weeks, you will return to your respective countries, you will have become Apostles and true Ambassadors of Olympism. And Olympism needs as many Apostles as possible because in this erratic world we live in, the Olympic ideal has some enemies who are trying to distort its philosophy and divert it from its real goal.

This is the reason why we are deeply concerned about the future of Olympism and of the Olympic Games.

Dear friends,

Nikos Kazantzakis, the distinguished Greek author, describes the significance of the site of Ancient Olympia with the following simple lines:

> *A sacred landscape, nobility, calm reflection. A happy valley between low, tranquil mountains, protected by the wild Northern wind and the hot Southern wind, open only in the West towards the sea from where, along the Alpheios river, the wet sea wind rushes in. There is no landscape more sublime in Greece that calls us so sweetly and persistently to peace and reconciliation.*

Welcome to the land of Olympic culture.

ADDRESS
by the Mayor of Ancient Olympia
Efthimios KOTZAS

Distinguished Guests and Lecturers, and Young Participants in the 59th International Session,

On behalf of the citizens of the Municipality of Ancient Olympia, I welcome you all to this sacred place, which the ancient and modern history of the Olympic Games has entrusted with its most noble memories.

I welcome you to the place where the Olympic Games were held for 1200 years; the games that converted the notion of athletics into a universal value, cultivating sentiments of friendship and brotherhood in the ancient world.

I welcome you to the place where, since 1936, the Olympic Flame has been lit for the modern Olympic Games, each time calling for hands not to reach for weapons and for all hostilities on the planet to be halted for the duration of the Games.

It is therefore a particular pleasure for me to be here with you for the opening of the 59th International Session for Young Participants, and especially because the main subject of the Session is Olympic diplomacy and peace, which of course is relevant to the modern Olympic Games, but at the same time dates back to Ancient Greece. It is something which all of us in the Municipality of Ancient Olympia believe can play a key role in the resolution of future differences.

Combining the promotion of peace and brotherhood with the greatest ideals of sport –noble competition, fair play, fighting on equal terms and physical exercise– constitutes the Olympic idea of Olympism, as it was understood and applied by the ancient Greeks. It is precisely what the poet Kostis Palamas expressed in the Olympic Anthem: "Immortal ancient spirit of beauty, of greatness and of truth…"

There is no doubt that the institution of the Truce was initially established at the time of the reorganisation of the Games around the 8th century BC and led to the sanctuary of Olympia becoming a Pan-Hellenic sanctuary. Indeed, the

people of Elis took care to inscribe the agreement on a bronze disc – known as the Iphitos Disc – which in the 2nd century AD was held in safekeeping in the *opisthodomos* or rear extension of the temple of Hera. The commissioning of a sculpture may also be attributed to the people of Elis. This sculpture was seen by Pausanias in the 2nd century AD in the vestibule of the temple of Zeus and depicted a personification of the Truce crowning Iphitos.

Consequently, the institution of the sacred Truce has come to be identified with and renewed at Olympia in modern times. Considering the significance of this institution's contribution for awakening the conscience of the world with regard to issues of peace, friendship and brotherhood between peoples, we in the Municipality of Ancient Olympia believe that the sacred Truce can become a unique tool for promoting world peace.

Thus, in April 2016 with the revival and establishment of the sacred Truce, our Municipality in collaboration with the Municipalities of Sparta and Elis-as representatives of the three cities which agreed upon the Sacred Truce throughout antiquity – and on the occasion of the Rio De Janeiro Olympic Games, went on to declare the revival of the Olympic Truce in line with the tradition of the ancient world.

With the permission of the Ministry of Culture, this ceremony took place in

front of the temple of Hera, where the Disc of Iphitos was kept, thus embracing the power of these monuments' symbolism and the values they express.

The declaration was signed by such prominent figures as the President of the Hellenic Republic, Prokopios Pavlopoulos, the President of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach and others, for its adoption by the UN General Assembly.

With the support of the President, Thomas Bach, this procedure was repeated for the PyeongChang Olympics in South Korea.

Our vision, with the guarantees and contributions of distinguished representatives of bodies and organisations of local, national and world communities, together with the Olympic Movement following the examples of Cleisthenes, Iphitos and Lycurgus, is to renew each time, in the birthplace of the Olympic Games, the ideals of Olympism; and also to proclaim to the whole world the sacred agreement from antiquity of the Olympic Truce, in the place where ancient mythology and tradition meet with modern history: *so that each time we may offer an opportunity for peace and reconciliation between peoples to prevail.*

With these thoughts, I wish you a pleasant stay in our land and success in the works of your Session.

IOA Honorary Dean, Prof. Konstantinos Georgiadis provides information about the Pierre de Coubertin stele.

Coordinators read quotes of the Pierre de Coubertin's writings during the ceremony.

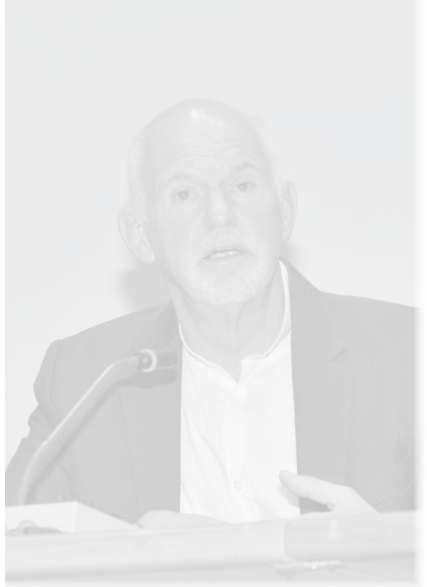
Laying of wreath at the John Ketseas and Carl Diem monument by the lecturers, Dr Ian Brittain and Dr Benu Gupta.

Laying of wreath at the stele of Pierre de Coubertin by the IOTF Vice-Chairperson George Papandreou, the IOTF Board Member and IOA President Isidoros Kouvelos.

Guided tour at Acropolis.

Guided tour at the archaeological site of Delphi.

Guided tour at the archaeological site in ancient Olympia.



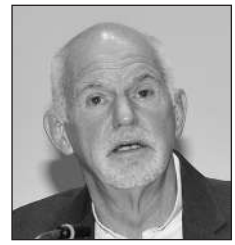
Proceedings

Lectures

The opinions of the lecturers do not necessarily reflect those of the International Olympic Academy. Out of respect for multiculturalism and diversity of scientific research, we do not intervene in the way each lecturer chooses to present his/her bibliography and footnotes.

OLYMPIC TRUCE AS AN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION

George PAPANDREOU (GRE)
Former Prime Minister of Greece
Vice-Chairperson of the International Olympic Truce Foundation (IOTF)



It is an honour for me to participate in the 59th International Session for Young Participants.

Let me introduce you to the Olympic Truce by making a brief reference to ancient times. Back then, around 776 BC, according to the myth, Iphitos, the king of one of Greece's city-states, which were in constant conflict, went to the Delphic Oracle to ask how he could end these conflicts. The Oracle urged him to revive the Olympic Games as a means to achieving temporary peace. As the messengers traveled to various cities and states announcing the Games, participants began their preparations, which essentially meant that armed conflicts gradually took a back seat, as citizens who were also soldiers took part in the Games, where a victory took on great value –not just symbolic– and this resulted in a reduction in the amount of time willingly devoted to bearing arms. Thus, every four years a ceasefire was agreed to for athletes, spectators and artists to travel to and from the Games in Olympia. The Truce was observed, though not always in full, for some 1,200 years, making it the most durable peace accord in history.

In modern times, up until the end of the so-called Cold War, sports and Olympism were, one way or another, victims of world politics. They were postponed during the two world wars; countries boycotted them for political reasons. However, shortly after the end of the Cold War, in Lillehammer, in 1994 the Olympic family and the United Nations took the lead. They proved

Lecture by the IOTF Vice-Chairperson and former Prime Minister of Greece, George Papandreou on the international institution of Olympic Truce.

that in coordination with each other, they can actively contribute to securing even for a short time the cessation of hostilities. Thus, during the Opening Ceremony of the Lillehammer Winter Games and for 24 hours a ceasefire was achieved in the whole of ex-Yugoslavia. Even in a small corner of the earth. Yet, it was a precious beginning.

Six years later, when I was Foreign Minister I proposed to the Greek government, in cooperation with the International Olympic Committee, to try reviving the idea of the Olympic Truce by creating an agency –the International Olympic Truce Foundation/Centre– to promote the necessity of honouring the Truce; that is, a ceasefire lasting through the 16 days of the Games themselves, in an effort to adapt the practice of the ancient Truce to the demands of modern times.

The initiative of reviving the Olympic Truce up to now has been very successful. Not only because of the important work carried out by the Olympic Truce Foundation and Centre but also because we managed to create international awareness at different levels. A number of signed resolutions have

been promoted by prominent individuals and organisations, which, it appears, are adopting this view and are ready to contribute to the idea of the Olympic Truce. The UN resolutions as well as those passed by the European Union and the United States Senate are worth noting in addition to the unanimous and supportive decisions adopted by many international organisations.

As Foreign Minister, I took the initiative of promoting a first resolution on the Olympic Truce to be signed by world leaders. I signed it together with the then Foreign Minister of Turkey Ismail Cem as a symbolic gesture at a meeting held in Athens. This resolution has been signed by all the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Balkan countries, followed by numerous prominent individuals of the European Union. Religious leaders following Patriarch Bartholomew's initiative also signed the declaration for the Olympic Truce. We can understand today the value of the signatures of Shimon Peres, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel and Nabil Saat, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian authority.

Apart from the diplomatic and symbolic significance of such initiatives, for us, it is crucial to make all necessary efforts for achieving a ceasefire in war zones, if only for a month, because it provides an opportunity for a number of actions: from the provision of humanitarian aid, through the opening of requisite corridors, to time for seeking a compromise formula. The main reasoning behind the Olympic Truce is that, through a temporary ceasefire, we provide the time for the involved parties not just to sit at the negotiating table, but also to see the benefits of non-conflict and to consider whether, in the end, it is worth their while to continue hostilities rather than live in peace; not necessarily in harmony, but in peace!

Sport is in a unique position to put the spirit of the Olympic Truce into practice. Sport is the only area of human existence that has achieved universal law. Regardless of where in the world we practice sport, the rules are the same and apply to everyone. They are based on our shared values. Sport is always about building bridges it is never about erecting walls. In Olympic sport, all people are equal, regardless of their race, gender, social status, cultural background, faith or belief. This fundamental principle of non-discrimination allows sport to promote peace and understanding among all people.

Education

Nelson Mandela said that "education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world". This is certainly true. It is worth-noting that IOC President, Dr Thomas Bach, attaches great importance to Olympic education, which is a boosting incentive for all of us who serve the Olympic ideals and are part of the Olympic family.

On our behalf, the International Olympic Truce Centre strongly supports grassroots programmes and community-based action. Sport and cultural projects contribute to our efforts to bring communities closer, get them know each other's special characteristics (religion, language, tradition, etc.) and eventually accept them. If this endeavour is to succeed, we need to have the younger generation on our side. We need their spontaneity, their passion, their idealism and their creative expression, all of which make them the best possible ambassadors of our timeless messages. And in that respect, we need your support and assistance!

In Olympic sport, all people are equal, regardless of their race, gender, social status, cultural background, faith or belief. This fundamental principle of non-discrimination allows sport to promote peace and understanding among all people. The Olympic values (excellence, friendship, respect) are the prerequisite not only for moving our societies forward, but also for restraining or defusing conflicts or disputes which, in addition to their other tragic consequences, destabilise entire countries or regions. Conflicts that are waged for years. And because of them, we are running the danger of losing generations of young men and women who are imbued with hatred and intolerance; young men and women who learn the art of war and fight in war zones from their early years; young men and women who learn to handle a weapon better than they use a ball, and they believe that the things that divide people are greater than the things that unite them. In contrast, we strongly believe that the things that unite us are greater than the things that divide us!

Before I conclude, let me share with you my thoughts about the recent success in PyeongChang Winter Games:

We often underestimate the power of sport to bridge differences, if not to resolve them altogether. In the case of an issue as complex and difficult as that of the Korean Peninsula, which involves regional and international interests, competition between big powers, and the risk of nuclear war, the

Winter Olympic Games provided an opportunity for the two Koreas to come to the table for talks after an uneasy hiatus of about two years. The Games certainly didn't settle all their differences, but they enabled the two sides to come closer together, de-escalate tensions and bear witness to the beneficial consequences of peace, as opposed to the risks involved in sustaining (any) potential for conflict. The "opportunity" of the Olympic Games at last served as a springboard for talks on thornier issues, provided the two sides showed the requisite political will. Regardless of the result, we should reflect on the fact that if it were not for the milestone of the PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games this February, there would not have been an occasion for the dialogue between Seoul and Pyongyang.

In this respect, the International Olympic Truce Centre is looking forward to your active participation in its activities. Based on your experience and expertise, your contribution would be to participate in a global network through which we will exchange ideas, experiences and know-how with the aim of developing new projects that will promote respect for human rights and the Olympic ideals.

I would like to close my intervention by reminding you of the old African saying that "this world is not ours; we have borrowed it from our children". So, we owe to them to give it back in the best possible condition.

UNDERSTANDING SPORT AS A TOOL FOR DIPLOMACY. SPORT DIPLOMACY: CONCEPT, FRAMEWORK AND PRACTICE

Dr J. Simon ROFE (GBR)
Reader in Diplomatic and International Studies
& Programme Director, MA Global Diplomacy
Master Programme, Centre for International Studies
and Diplomacy (CISD)
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS),
University of London

Sport is central to twenty-first century life. I make this statement clearly at the outset of my lecture today. To this audience it may hardly need saying; but it is not a message that it resonates across all aspects of a 21st Century global and glocal society. Diplomacy can provide an underpinning contribution to that communication task; resting as it does on a troika of three fundamentals:

- Communication
- Representation
- Negotiation

We are all familiar with Nelson Mandela's oft quoted words, to paraphrase:

Sport needs Diplomacy. Equally, and with some overlap, and some distinction, i.e. a nexus - Diplomacy needs sport.

My scope in addressing the relationship between sport and diplomacy will be as follows:

- Definitions
- Global Diplomacy
- Where to start? Why sport diplomacy is worth studying.
- Dimensions of the *Sport Diplomatique*
- Exciting new field of academic and policy research
- Conclusions

Lecture by Dr J. Simon Rofe, Reader in Diplomatic and International Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

I want to begin with a personal aside: that reveals not only a personal investment; the emotional connection with sport; the insight into a hidden world, but most importantly representation of four flags which have come to symbolise –to my mind at least– a definition of sport diplomacy.

In this first image you see me in London 2012 Gamesmaker uniform outside Buckingham Palace at the end of the London Paralympic Games. It was the opportunity to be part of that 'summer' that led me on to the second and third images.

Mr Greg Hartung; Vice President of the International Paralympic Organisation. One of the most skilled diplomats I have ever seen.

The next image is of four flags: from left to right

- The IPC
- The UN
- LOCOG
- The Union Jack

One is an international non-governmental organisation; one is the world's

preeminent state organisations; one is a time-defined logistical body; and one is the flag of a sovereign state.

So where to start?

Questions to consider:

1. Where do you start with Sport and Diplomacy?

2. Provide examples of diplomatic relations within the history of sport. How has this improved/harmed a state's relationship with foreign powers?

Definitions:

Diplomacy has three core interrelated characteristics

- Communication
- Representation
- Negotiation

What is going on here?

The range of actors: Two Governments – MFAs and President and PM; one football club owned by Abu Dhabi City Football Group; Chinese state investment firms; individual player (Argentinian), Manchester regional authority ("Northern Powerhouse") Multinational corporation (Nike), one football club (Manchester City).

Why sport diplomacy is worth thinking about because:

- Sport brings people together
- It is dynamic and dramatic
- Provides insight into our understanding of diplomacy – and therefore life

Sport diplomacy: Problematising Terms

- Cultural Relations – "people to people" and "many to many" and arm's length institutions British Council etc.
- Cultural Diplomacy – "the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding" (2003:1 Cummings) and related to Soft Power as a 'tool' (2016 Nisbett)
- Cultural Policy – a strong heritage in economic and social – not FP domain – functions of Cultural Assets and Institutions
- Public Diplomacy and Soft Power (Singh & MacDonald 2017)
- Remarkable "abundance of terms and that these are used vaguely,

loosely, and interchangeably" – *a semantic constellation* Ang, Isar, and Mar (2015)

- Cultural as a gateway to performance theory
- "Performance theory suggests that every one of us puts on a performance in our society".
- The concept of performance thereby enables an assessment of the ways in which individuals act and react in the world
- While also possessing a resistance identity - a function of Manuel Castells work on identity
- Austen (1962) famously used, "I name this ship", or, "I now pronounce you man and wife", as examples of both authoritative statements and how words perform events. Consideration of performativity therefore involves investigating how words are used to describe and define.
- These words create the past in a particular way for public consumption
- This is certainly so when the use of the past and history is considered in contemporary struggles for identity and representation
- Performance quality: Naoko's Theatre of Diplomacy Stages, Actors, Scripts, Audiences
- Genres and repertoire – not the binaries of old and new; private and public

What do we understand by public diplomacy?

- Communication and Representation to a nation's public rather than to its government
- Much debated: Cull, Pamment, USC
- Draws on concepts from Public Relations, Communications, Soft Power and nation-branding
- Who does public diplomacy?
- To what extent does the state have to be involved?
- How do we assess its influence?

A number of approaches to public diplomacy follow on from this.

Sport Diplomatique

- Sport diplomacy: the nexus in global affairs of sporting and diplomatic realms, where overlapping practices and approaches allow for multi-directional dimensions of social, political, and economic networks

between and amongst a full range of polities (individuals, organisations, and nation-states et al). (Rofe 2016)
- Signature characteristics: SME, SINGOs
- Touch points: performance, identity, brand
- Back eddy's – not linear

Questions for the future

- Links with practitioners
- Who are the practitioners:
- A network UN Director General's office Geneva; National Olympic Committees; The British Council; the FCO's Head of Soft Power; the Premier League; Sport and Recreation Alliance; Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe - Office for Human Rights; World Rugby; ICON Sports Marketing
- Global Sports Conversations https://soundcloud.com/soasradio/sets/global-sport-conversations
  - Sport and diplomacy as a function of global diplomacy
  - Language and protocol: "Sport and diplomacy" or "Sport diplomacy"
  - "Classic examples" 1936 Olympics, Ping-Pong Diplomacy, Boycotts 80 and 84, and South Africa
  - Sport and politics – the message not the medium
  - Practice of sport and diplomacy
  - Networks and layers of sport and diplomacy
  - Supra and sub-state dimensions to sport
  - Non-state actors involvement in diplomacy
  - Identity and sport and diplomacy
  - Sport, development, peace – relationship with sport
  - Participatory component of sport and diplomacy

Questions for us now:

- What role does sport play in the realm of international diplomacy?
- To what extent does sport diplomacy relate to other forms of diplomacy?
- Can sport address gender bias on the field and out of it?

- How does sport contribute to development of global media, and globalisation/glocalisation?
- Level of analysis – where do we begin and move beyond case study overload?
- What identities does sport create, perpetuate and subdue?
- Can you have diplomacy without the State?

Link to Practice and the SDGs

- Which of the SDGs do you think sport can contribute to?

Sport diplomacy peace and violence:

To quote George Orwell –

George Orwell warned in 1945 against "blah- blahing about the clean, healthy rivalry of the football field and the great part played by the Olympic Games in bringing the nations together"; instead, he warned that sport brought out nationalism's worst characteristics.

Orwell saw nationalism as "the lunatic modern habit of identifying oneself with large power units and seeing everything in terms of competitive prestige". To this he contended, "you do make things worse by sending forth a team of eleven men, labelled as national champions, to do battle against some rival team, and allowing it to be felt on all sides that whichever nation is defeated will 'lose face'".

Sports people as Ambassadors: This is an area with the need for pressing further research.

Boots instead of brief-cases - but diplomats still'

"…Players for England must be footballers, gentlemen, and ambassadors too. They carry a grave burden on their shoulders, calling on them to be well behaved both on and off the field".

And administrators:

For instance, Jacques Rogge and Greg Hartung.

Former UK Ambassador to Lebanon (2011-2015), Tom Fletcher, confirms this role for informal diplomats in stating that the promotion of a "national brand will be more credible when carried by sportsmen, artists, royals or businesses, most importantly by people". Again referring to McConnell here, in her work with Dittmer and Moreau, they identify how entities at the margins of diplomacy, such as a government in exile, mimic state-diplomatic practices. This

serves to promote "'official' state diplomacy as the 'gold standard' to aspire to', and simultaneously "reduces the gap" to "'unofficial' diplomacies". Similarly, Ken Wiesbrode argues, building on the identification of paradiplomacy in the 1990s, that when "para-diplomatic bodies… enter the picture they are important diplomatic facilitators". Wiesbrode identifies these as 'think tanks, humanitarian organizations, philanthropies, and the "like": the "like" includes FIFA and other sporting organisations. Weisbrode writes: "By enlarging the field of diplomacy in this way, such organizations and the policy entrepreneurs who work for them can play several roles: foil, cheering section, loyal opposition, 'team b' – sometimes all at once. They are also diplomats of a kind". A history of FIFA, as a sport-diplomatic player/actor as exemplified in the core sections of this article, supports the argument that the *Sport Diplomatique* is a prime venue for informal diplomats to conduct their practice.

Case study examples:

UN & FIFA

- 1999 official agreement signed between UN & FIFA
- Subsequently FIFA works with WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP & ILO
UN & IOC
- IOC given UN observer status in 1999
- UN Office for Sport for Development and Peace 2001
- *"Olympic principles are United Nations principles"*
- April 2014 MOU IOC and the UN "share the same values of contributing to a better and peaceful world through sport".
- 2014 resolution "*Encouraging* Member States to give sport due consideration in the context of the post-2015 development agenda".

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OLYMPIC MOVEMENT AS A SOFT POWER IN DIPLOMACY

Dr Dionyssis GANGAS (GRE)
Member of the IOC Commission for Culture and Olympic Heritage
Former Professor of International Humanitarian Law

Dear young participants in this year's Session of the International Olympic Academy for young people from all over the world,

On the occasion of the one-year anniversary of the Opening of the Winter Olympic Games PyeongChang, on the 7th of last February, the IOC President, Dr Thomas Bach stated during his warm message:

> *The Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 were a success story in so many respects. From the sporting achievements and the athletes' experience to the excellent organisation, these Games opened up new horizons in more ways than anyone could have imagined. The best expression of this was the joint march of the athletes of the National Olympic Committees of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the Opening Ceremony. They entered the Olympic Stadium as one team, united behind one flag, the Korean unification flag. With these powerful symbols in PyeongChang, we saw how the Olympic Games can open the way to dialogue, how the Olympic values can open the way to a more peaceful future. It is our hope that this door to a more peaceful future on the Korean Peninsula will remain open. Sport must continue to build bridges and show what it can do to bring people together. The IOC is committed*

Dr Dionyssis Gangas, IOA's Development Projects Consultant and Member of the IOC Commission for Culture and Olympic Heritage, analysed his ideas on the Olympic Movement as a soft power in diplomacy.

to continuing to support the ongoing political peace talks on the Korean Peninsula through sport.

The IOC President used the example of PyeongChang to showcase the contribution of the Olympic Movement, through its most characteristic expression, the Olympic Games, to the peaceful settlement of political and ideological disputes, with the aim to preserve peace.

At the same time, however, Bach used it as an example of the Olympic Movement's ability to operate as a kind of international law, which contributes to the promotion of world peace and development, a universal, global implementation of rules of sports competition, compared to other rules that regulate the operation of each society separately. Indeed, in his effort to support his position concerning the autonomy of the sports movement, he underscored that, if we permit governments to determine their own rules in sports, such as football or other sports, this would mean *"the end of international sports"*. As he stated at his speech at the Opening of the Asian Games in 2014 in Incheon,

underscoring the real role of sports in daily life: *"... "So we need this worldwide application of our rules to ensure also in the future that sport remains this international phenomenon – which only sport can offer".*

The recommencing of South and North Korea peace talks is the latest episode in a series of diplomatic actions undertaken by the Olympic Movement on the international stage, which over time has proven the soft power of Olympism, contributing successfully to resolving political disputes.

How do we perceive the term soft power?

According to Håvard Mokleiv Nygård of the Peace Research Institute Oslo[1], whose approach to the matter I consider to be exceptional:

> *"Soft Power" is the power to persuade whereby one actor in a non-coercive manner convinces another to want the same things he/she wants. Sport can be used as tool of soft power both internationally and domestically. Peacebuilding and nation-building can be achieved through four mechanisms of sport diplomacy and politics: image-building; building a platform for dialogue; trust building; and reconciliation, integration and anti-racism. These mechanisms are not deterministically controllable and can have unintended consequences. On the one hand, sporting events can be used as a means of building trust between adversaries.*

Image-building

The Olympic Movement has forged its own strong profile – a result of the path it has taken over many years, as well as its roots. It comprises, as is known, the most recognisable brand worldwide.

A country hosting major sports events signals the special presence of that country on the international sports stage and that country is the focus of the world's attention for many days. The governments of those countries use the event as a means to mobilise economic forces and human resources in a very short period of time, which under normal conditions would be almost impossible. This is a strong example of using the soft power of sports, inside the

1. Håvard Mokleiv Nygård: "Soft power at home and abroad: Sport diplomacy, politics and peace-building" (2013) – International Area Studies Review.

country and abroad. We refer to this mechanism as image-building by investing in political capital.

Building a platform for dialogue

As has been proven by a series of events in the past, sport is able to create the appropriate platform, which helps sustain and develop actions capable of surmounting obstacles, often created by dogmatic stereotypes.

In 1986 the first Goodwill Games in Moscow between the USA and USSR reopened a broad channel to re-establish formal relations between the two countries. Similarly, Ping-Pong diplomacy formed the basis for the opening of relations between China and the USA. In general, sporting events, from the World Cup and Olympic Games to a simple friendly match, strengthen ties between nations and people, and provide a venue for peaceful cultural exchange, which can serve as the basis for further normalization of political relations. We refer to this mechanism as building a platform for dialogue. Here we should point out that hosting a sporting event can involve two different (but related) mechanisms. The central idea behind using sport as a platform for dialogue is distinct from image-building. One entails self-promotion (image-building), while the other (creating a platform for dialogue) features the promotion of a relationship. Hosting in and of itself is not the mechanism –indeed, it does not imply causality and it is observable. The construction of the basis for dialogue is unobservable, but with real consequences.

Trust-building

Moving ever more micro, sport can be used to build trust, and through trust-building build peace. In order to do so, a specific sporting event, by being staged on a repetitive basis, should act as a locus of trust between participants enabling obstacles to be set aside, which would be impossible otherwise. Besides the Olympic Games, where teams and delegations co-exist in the same residential space such as the Olympic village, offering a safe environment for the cross-cultural exchange of ideas, individual sporting events can also act as platforms of safety and mutual trust. For example, each year Norway hosts the Norwegian Cup, an international youth soccer cup, which brings together teams

from all over the world, including teams from the third world. During the 1997 Norwegian cup, a team of Palestinians played for the first time against an Israeli team. The main idea behind organising such a tournament is to encourage personal interaction, which can foster understanding and friendships. Through this bottom-up approach, peace is secured through the interaction of persons from different societies, cultures and religions.

Reconciliation, integration and anti-racism

The fourth mechanism is used when sport is used to build peace within a country through reconciliation, integration and anti-racism. Sport is a cultural institution that stands at the interface between political and civil society. In divided communities, sport has been an agent of separation, sectarian hatred and violence, but also a highly effective tool for conflict resolution, reconciliation and peace-building. In South Africa, rugby, strongly associated with the white ruling class, was seen as a symbol of apartheid. In this case, Mandela's objective in hosting the Rugby World Cup was primarily to foster reconciliation and integration between South Africans. Similarly, very recently, the IOC policy which created a separate team, in which political migrants from various countries participated, constitutes an initiative with great importance in the peacebuilding effort.

Dear friends,

By looking back in time, we can see that although many people spoke out against the relationship between the Olympic Movement and politics, this has always existed since antiquity and up to the present day. Usually, various researchers focus on the negative side of this relationship, i.e. whereby politics intervene in the Olympic Movement taking advantage of sports for their own benefit, both in domestic affairs, as well as on the international political stage. At times provocative actions of a political or ideological nature have marked the Olympic Games. Although the most striking may well be the propaganda-rife Berlin Olympiad in 1936, the events in Munich in 1972 and the great boycotts of the Moscow and LA Olympics, nevertheless the nineteen sixties, seventies and eighties were full of interventions, both small and large, that prove the effort made by politics to exploit the Olympic Games.

At the beginning of the 20th century and after the Coubertin era and his romantic approach to amateur sports, sports appeared as a "social conquest" of the industrial age. Until that point it had depended on private initiative and the so-called "upper class", with its fixation on amateurism, without the presence of women and the participation of nationalistic minorities, it comprised, as we presently analyse it, a game for the "few". In this form the Olympic Movement was not really of concern to politics besides its opportunistic exploitation on a limited level. Few people believed that it could play a serious role on an international level, even though its strength had started being tested domestically in many states.

The interwar period was particularly important in the development of sports and politics, mainly through an increasing number of international sports meetings and the interest that the middle class started showing in that period. The simplistic exploitation of the internationalised sports phenomenon, which had prevailed until that time, became a tool in the hands of totalitarian regimes. Even democratic regimes were involved, in an effort to balance the ideologically opposing political trends. The emergence of the new countries, mainly from Africa, with exceptionally skilled athletes, was yet another factor in a new climate forging the relationship of sports and politics.

It was now certain that sports could be used both internationally and nationally to promote national unity and identity. In the ever-changing world stage of the last decades, there was an increasing awareness of the political importance of sports, which resulted in its use as a political tool by a large number of countries up until the end of the nineteen eighties.

Nobody now contests the fact that the Olympic Movement, however much it tried to stay away from politics, was minimally successful at it. However, it is important to note that in this respect, theoreticians and experts expressed opposing views. One side desperately insisted on the complete separation of politics from sports, headed by Avery Brundage, IOC President from 1952 to 1972, who throughout his involvement in sporting developments was a passionate champion of this theory. This extreme view was considered unrealistic and conflicting with reality, as already from the outset of the Olympic Movement, politics played an important role in its evolution.

On the other hand, already from the era of J. A. Samaranch, the involvement of politics in sports and vice versa, sometimes positive and sometimes negative, had been fully recognised and we have reached the point today where it is

"imposed" in a certain manner by the new IOC leadership, as a necessary precondition for co-existence in a world full of inequality. This opinion was straightforwardly expressed by the incumbent IOC President T. Bach in one of his recent speeches[2].

M. P. Cottrell and T. Nelson[3] explain the above attempts to intervene in Olympic developments, as follows:

> *…the relationship between sport and international politics is not a simple one and many paradoxes lie at the heart of this relationship. The Olympics represent one of the most heated and intense forms of international competition, but they are also used as a symbol to promote peace. Olympic sport strives to be apolitical, yet is consistently politicized. The Olympics are designed around and orchestrated according to a state-based international system, yet activist groups and institutions such as the IOC can exercise unusual power at these events. It is precisely these paradoxes that make the Olympics so much more than a sporting event, but an important political, social, economic, and cultural phenomenon.*

The Olympic Movement, having thrown off the constrictions imposed by political expedience, does not seek to play a transcendental and decisive role on the international political stage. It simply has the ability now to impose its own independence, by establishing its own autonomy and the relationship has gradually been reversed. It seems the Olympic Movement has acquired the dynamics it has sought since its inception, to gradually become a respected soft power in the realm of international politics.

This new direction of the Olympic Movement brought it to threshold of the United Nations, where its soft power was recognised.

As Professor Stephan Wassong notes[4]:

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2. Speech by the IOC President at the opening ceremony of the Asian Games in Incheon, South Korea (24/09/2014)
3. M. Patrick Cottrell and Travis Nelson: *"Not just the Games? Power protest and politics at the Olympics"* – European Journal of International Relations, 2011, 17 (http://ejt.sagepub.com/content/17/4/729).
4. Stephan Wassong: The UN attitude to Olympic Peace, (2010) Rethinking Matters Olympic: Investigations into the Socio-Cultural Study of the Modern Olympic Movement Tenth International Symposium for Olympic Research.

> *…for the first time in the history, in the Olympic Congress in Copenhagen (2009), the Olympic Movement, put a strong focus on the relationship of the IOC with the UN. In his opening address, Jacques Rogge, pointed out that the world had become more complex and globalized and that the IOC was not able to solve all problems on its own but was obliged to set up strong partnerships: "We can't change the world on our own, but we can and we do help make it a better world." Jacques Rogge said. The evidence of the partnership with the UN can be seen in a symbolic way. The UN flag has been hoisted in the main stadium and the athletes' village since the 1998 Nagano Olympic Winter Games. Since the 1980s cooperation agreements between UN bodies (including UNESCO, UNICEF, UNEP and UN Habitat) and Olympic organisations have been signed and the Olympic Movement agreed on the IOC's commitment to the UN "Millennium Goals".*

In October 2009, the IOC was granted UN observer status and in May 2010 the first UN forum was held in Lausanne on combating terrorism. After Rogge's opening address at the Olympic Congress in Copenhagen, the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon addressed the participants and underscored the power of sports as a vehicle for global humanitarian aid and hope:

> *Sport can be found anywhere in the world. I have travelled to countries mired in poverty. The communities struggled to survive. To war-ravaged places where all hope seems lost. Suddenly, a ball appears, made out of plastic bags or newspapers. And we see sport gives life to hopes and dreams.*

In his speech, Ban Ki-moon referred to his special adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, Wilfried Lemke. In his view, sports is a universal language that unites people and builds bridges. The key responsibility of Lemke is to *"promote sports as an instrument for development and peace. The UN's position on Olympic Peace, both within the UN and outside of it, is to encourage the creation of partnerships in this sector"*. Ban Ki-moon stated that the UN attached great importance to the initiatives of the International Olympic Committee for Peace, which he considered an outstanding example in the effort of striving for the Olympic peace idea.

It is true that despite the successive interventions of politics in sports, already, since the middle of the previous century, the Olympic Movement had shown what a positive role it could play in political affairs, when in a set of realistic actions by the IOC addressed to Governments and National Olympic Committees, light was shed on a different side of the Olympic Movement.

In no few cases the intervention of the IOC in political developments was considered to be positive and effective, placing the Institution in a critical but also key position of a dominant player on the international political stage.

The following cases constitute characteristic examples of a positive intervention of the Olympic Movement in outstanding political conflicts:

(1) Recognition of the Olympic Committee of East Germany before the latter was recognised as an independent political entity by the UN. This act of the IOC most certainly led to the faster political recognition of GDR by the United Nations.

(2) The IOC's intervention in the political rivalry between China and Taiwan was also positive, adopting a practical solution, beneficial for both countries, keeping both Olympic Committees on the Olympic Charter, accepting the latter as Chinese Taipei.

(3) The IOC's position in the case of North and South Korea at the end of the eighties with the Seoul Olympic Games (1980) was also instrumental. The IOC, under the President Juan Antonio Samaranch, was unable to bring about a diplomatic rapprochement of the two Countries, but managed in spite of unfavourable conditions to impose the Principles of the Olympic Movement in sports practice and indirectly to contribute to the general change in the social and political conditions in South Korea.

(4) Amongst the most important positive instances of mixing politics and sports was the so-called "ping-pong diplomacy" between China and the USA. It was perhaps the most characteristic case of sports being used as a vehicle for building relations between states with a major international impact. In 1971 the US table tennis team formally requested to be invited to China for a series of friendly matches. This sporting event paved the way for Nixon's visit to China and the eventual normalisation of relations between the USA and China. Sport diplomacy in this case served as a means of peacebuilding between superpowers.

(5) In the case of South Africa, with its exclusion from the Olympic Games for twenty years, the Olympic Movement flexed its muscle as a soft power in human rights protection. It was the first time where the implementation of the Principles of the Charter by a National Olympic Committee was the subject of many debates and was finally imposed in an absolutist manner.

(6) The recent recognition of Kosovo by the Olympic Committee, although Kosovo has not yet been recognised as an independent political entity by the UN, shows that the Olympic Movement follows its own course of absolute independence, which helps promote political positions based on their sports standing, imposing its own rules, which are respected by all member states.

(7) The most recent and important instance of diplomatic talks being resumed between South and North Korea is an outstanding example of the efficacy of the Olympic Movement in the cause of international peace.

(8) And, finally, as I underscored above, the IOC's decision to foster solidarity towards political refugees, with the participation of a separate team in the Olympic Games under its flag, is clear proof of the Olympic Movement's potential to constitute once more a key soft power in international developments.

IOC President, Dr Thomas Bach, in addressing the UN General Assembly in New York in November 2013, underscored the need for autonomy in the structure and operation of sports:

> *…Sport [is] truly the only area of human existence which has achieved universal law.[…] Politics must respect this sporting autonomy [...] The excellent relations between the UN and the IOC can in this respect serve as an example for relations on the national level between National Olympic Committees and national governments. This relationship with governments requires that sport always remains politically neutral*[5].

5. https://www.olympic.org/news/historic-milestone-united-nations-recognises-autonomy-of-sport

Dear friends,

During these days that you will spend at the IOA premises in Ancient Olympia, allow your thoughts to lead you down the paths forged by Ancient Greeks through Olympism and its values. Give yourselves the opportunity to approach the person next to you as much as possible, showing respect for their individuality, their particularity, their special personality and beliefs.

The Olympic Movement places its trust in youth and its ambitions. Build a collegial world around you, looking to the future with hope. Thus, you will also support the strength of the Olympic Movement, so that it continues to be a soft power that consolidates international peace.

THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF THE EU SPORT DIPLOMACY

Yves LE LOSTECQUE (FRA)
Head of the Sport Unit in the European Commission

I first would like to thank Mr Isidoros Kouvelos, the President of the prestigious International Olympic Academy, for this kind invitation to address the 59th International Session for Young Participants. I consider it as a rare chance to be given the opportunity to make this presentation at the real home of sports, at its birthplace!

It is for me a privileged occasion to explain what the EU is doing in the field of sport diplomacy, of external relations in sport, to underline what the Commission can bring to EU countries, sport organisations and clubs. It is also an opportunity to consider with you how we can cooperate with non-EU countries.

It is clear that European sport is undergoing substantial changes and facing new challenges which are largely common to other continents: increased commercialisation which brings more funding but also new dangers into sport, necessity to integrate migrants and refugees, more awareness of the sustainability and environmental concerns, increased strength of private actors challenging traditional federations and keen to create private leagues, development of new technologies, etc. These evolutions take place in a context where we can notice worrying trends in the level of physical activity of European citizens as well as changes in the ways of practicing sport: more individualism clearly... I would add that sport is no longer seen as being a purely leisure or well-being activity but more and more as a major tool of integration and education. Sport is also a major concern for politicians because of its major impact and the interest

it generates in the population. Everybody is interested and most of the time passionate about sport.

I consider that we have a lot to learn from sport in international cooperation. Major sport organisations and federations have for a long time been organising themselves at international level and put in place umbrella structures. They have put in place international events and competitions. They have adopted common rules including the "rules of the game". Given this, sport is a powerful tool in helping to ensure cooperation among countries, in promoting common values, and more generally, soft diplomacy.

The topics I will cover in this presentation will include the following:

- The basics about the place of sport in the EU policy
- The objectives and activities of the EU
- The concept of EU sport diplomacy
- Some recent policy developments in sport
- An example of bilateral cooperation, specifically that of the China dialogue
- The Erasmus+ programme and its international dimension
- An outline of some of the other EU funding tools available
- An overview of the European Week of Sport
- Our pilot projects, specifically that of mobility exchanges

And I will conclude with some considerations for the future.

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So to begin with please allow me to provide a basic background to the framework we operate under.

With the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009 a sport competence was introduced in the Treaty: Article 165 gives the spirit of what is expected from the EU in the field of sport.

Of particular importance coming from Article 165 of the TFUE is: "The Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues". The EU action shall aim at "developing the European dimension in sport", and the possibility to "adopt incentive measures, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States (…)".

This can be considered as a perfect definition of the principle of subsidiarity. The EU intervenes if it can bring an added value. Otherwise, it is better to leave the national, regional or local actors to decide and organise their own rules and practices.

This means that the EU competence in the area of sport remains limited. The EU role is about supporting, coordinating and supplementing actions of Member States. Member States (or other public authorities) clearly have the basic competence in sport. And the Commission pays great attention in respecting the national, regional and local competences.

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Following the Lisbon Treaty, many initiatives have been taken in the field of sport. However, these initiatives have to be coherent and respectful of the main objectives of the EU. At EU level we have a couple of objectives which are relatively similar to those pursued by Member States.

Firstly, we aim at raising the level of practice of sport and physical activity among EU citizens.

As I am sure you know, recent data released through the WHO and Eurobarometer have shown the worrying extent of obesity levels across the EU.

Physical inactivity is one of the leading causes of death worldwide and research has shown that for the first time in history this current generation may in fact have a shorter lifespan than their parents. This is partly due to the unhealthy lifestyles many people are living.

Our second objective is to use *the integrational power of sport.*

The recent migration trends which confronted Europe are an example of the changing nature of society. This changing demographic and social composition brings with it new challenges. As such, sport can be a useful tool for uniting people, for the inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalised groups and general societal cohesion.

Another key interest of the EU in sport is related to the *promotion of sport competences and skills* and to support coaching, training and dual career initiatives.

We also work on the acquisition of life skills through sport. Sport is not merely an entertainment source; it can provide a number of important life skills for participants. These skills can help contribute to lifelong employability and in this way, also better contribute to the economy as well as the prosperity and sustainability of a country.

Finally, there is the point of *better governance and integrity in sport.*

Numerous scandals in sport in recent years have begun to erode the positive view of many sports. This has an impact on many areas of life including the economy, health and general ethics. Examples of these problems include

doping in sport or match fixing. Our interest in these areas therefore come from the perspective of protecting human health, ethics and European values, transparency and more. And it is also about the credibility of sport and its power of attracting people and money!

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Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Commission has developed a coherent "thinking" in the field of sport and has produced some key documents in order to explain its positions.

One major step forward has been the adoption of the Commission communication on "the European dimension of sport" in 2011.

We have also developed our work with other EU institutions, the Council for instance. Of particular interest and one that helps to guide some of our outputs is the EU Work Plan for Sport.

In the sport area the Commission must work closely with Member States. The EU Work Plan for Sport can be considered as a sport action plan with a roadmap. The current one was adopted on 23 May 2017 and will run until December 2020.

It is basically about agreeing about *priorities*, fixing working *methods*, and identifying *outputs*.

From a more output driven perspective, we can look at the expert group deliverables. The basic concept of this action is that the Commission aids in bringing together a group of experts in a particular area from the Member States. European and international sporting bodies are invited as observers and bring a decisive knowledge. The groups are organised and chaired by the European Commission representatives. These groups then produce various outputs from guidelines to the exchange of best practices. Currently there are two expert groups, one on integrity and the second one on skills and human resources in sport.

The other major institution is the European Parliament which is clearly an important actor in the field of EU sport. During the last years a sport intergroup has been very active in promoting European sport and to supporting sport integrity and grassroots sport.

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In this institutional context, the EU sport activity has increased considerably during the last years. In summary, our three main fields of intervention are

- Policy cooperation

- Programmes
- Initiatives

The Commission organises a policy cooperation with Member States and sport organisations on all subjects of EU interest. The fight against doping, match fixing, the promotion of good governance principles, gender equality in sport and volunteering in sport are good examples of this cooperation. This is done in formal environments such as the sport Council. It can also take the form of the permanent dialogue the Commission is having with Member States and sport organisations, through ad-hoc meetings and events like the EU Sport Forum.

The Commission regularly undertakes initiatives such as the European Week of Sport, the #BeActive Awards, the #BeInclusive Awards, the "Tartu Call for a Healthy Life style", etc.

We support financially sport organisations and all bodies dealing with sport through our Erasmus+ programme in particular.

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The issue of sport diplomacy is relatively new in an EU perspective. Back in 2015 sport diplomacy was more just a concept than a reality in the Commission. Following the Commission's conception, the Commission wanted to develop this tool further at EU level, because for the most part it was almost wholly an unexplored field for the EU at this time.

It was felt that sport should be better promoted in the EU's external relations. More than this, that sport could be a useful and important tool in order to promote the democratic values the EU wanted to spread.

It has been shown that sport diplomacy can contribute to improve international relations in many different way, some of which I outlined previously.

In all, sport diplomacy is really about the role sport can play in EU external relations. Let us remember Nelson Mandela who stated:

> *Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers.*

I think this quote speaks for itself. It is the idea guiding what we are doing in the field of sport diplomacy and sport in general.

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With regards to policy developments over the past several years we have come a long way. Before 2015 the reflection had not really started. A key year has been obviously 2015 when, at the initiative of Commissioner Navracsics a High-Level Group on Sport Diplomacy was established. This group consisted of five experts, which included politicians, academics, athletes, representatives of major sport organisations, etc.

This high-level group produced a report in 2016 and highlighted recommendations in three key areas of what the EU can do with regards to the use and promotion of sport diplomacy to help reach its goals and these included recommendations on:

1) External relations
2) The promotion of EU values in major sport events
3) Development of an organisational culture of sport diplomacy

These works generated a major interest including at Council level. During the Slovak Presidency in November 2016, Council Conclusions on sport diplomacy were adopted.

This political document was agreed with by all 28 Ministers responsible for sport. Basically, the document recognises that:

- Sport diplomacy can be understood as the use of sport as a means to influence diplomatic, intercultural, social, economic and political relations

- Emphasis should also be placed on the role of sport in the European Union's external relations, including the promotion of European values

As you can see this perfectly complements the emerging view of the Commission on the importance and value of sport diplomacy.

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As a follow up of the work of the high-Level Group, in 2016 and 2017 the Commission also organised two Seminars on Sport Diplomacy.

This was in order to follow-up on the High-Level Group and moreover to take stock of the state of play of the role of sport in international relations.

Furthermore in 2018 the Commission released a Study on Sport Diplomacy, which identified ongoing projects touching the concept of "sport diplomacy" and good practices. Basically it is a collection of good practices and funding possibilities for projects in the area of sport with an international dimension.

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I would like to bring your attention to one particularly interesting cooperation which was launched in the area of sport diplomacy, the bilateral cooperation with China. A *High-Level People-to-People Dialogue* took place in November 2017. The interesting thing for sport here is that sport was on the agenda for the first time.

A special seminar on sport was actually held on 15 November 2017 and was attended not only by the Chinese High-Level representative and the Commission but also a group of experts from the European sporting world.

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Let me now proceed onto the Commissions flagship programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport the Erasmus+ programme.

To give you some idea of the specifics of this programme here are some numbers.

The total budget for the Erasmus+ Programme in the years 2014-2020 is EUR 16,454 Billion.

But more specifically, the Sport specific chapter has a dedicated budget of 265 Million for the same period.

There are three main funding categories for sport actions, these being:

- Collaborative partnerships (max. 400,000 €)
- Small collaborative partnerships (max. 60,000 €)
- Non-for profit sport events (max. 500,000 €)

These projects must not be solely national projects but rather European projects incorporating different partner organisations from different countries (most of the time three or five in the field of sport). Non EU partners can also take part.

This programme enables us to fund both projects and events.

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It is clear that the international dimension of Erasmus+ is limited by our legal basis. Organisations participating in Erasmus+ projects must be established in a Programme Country.

On the other hand, organisations from Partner Countries can be involved in Erasmus+ Sport actions only as a partner (not as applicant).

Here you can see an overview of partner countries involved in the 2014-2018 period and some stats about the projects they have had funded. Leading these figures for the time being is Switzerland with almost ¾ of a million Euro and 24 funded projects.

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We also have a number of other funding tools at our disposal, these include the:

- European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI): Cross-border Cooperation Programme
- Foreign Policy Instrument: IcSP (Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace)
- European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)
- EU Peacebuilding Initiative
- Creative Europe
- Health programme
- Other parts of the Erasmus+ programme (such as Youth and Education)

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Now some words about an initiative which has expanded a lot during the last years. My Commissioner most of the time refers to it as a "success story". The European Week of Sport is a Commission initiative aiming at promoting physical activity across Europe.

Encouraged by the European Parliament and also by our Member States, it started in 2015 and is growing every year. It takes place annually between 23 and 30 September.

It is largely decentralised: each Member State has a National Coordinating

Body (NCB) which oversees the national activities. It involves partners from sport movement (Olympic Movement, federations, sport for all organisations, etc.).

Each year there is also an official launching event. This year it will be in Finland on 23 September.

As part of the week there is also a special award organised, the #BeActive EU Sport Awards, which recognise the efforts of different individuals and organisations in the area of healthy lifestyles promotion.

In 2018 it was decided to expand this event beyond the borders of the EU. The European Week of Sport is now open to the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership Countries and regions.

To commemorate this, a series of special events were held in Belgrade in September 2018, two seminars, and a round table debate.

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Finally, I would like to inform you about one particular action we are undertaking this year where funding is available thanks to the European Parliament.

It is a call for projects concerning exchanges and mobility in sport which was launched some days ago. Projects will have to integrate a non EU dimension. They will be selected in the coming months and the Commission will implement the section edition of this call in 2020. Last year this call allowed us to develop cooperation with countries such as China, Brazil, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ukraine, Montenegro, etc.

The objective is to encourage and provide sport staff (not athletes) to gain experience and improve their skills through an exchange period.

The budget for this year is currently of 1.4 million Euro. In 2018 we received 39 applications for the call and a total of seven projects were funded.

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As you may know the EU institutions will probably face major changes before the end of the year. An EU Parliament has just been elected. In a couple of months, a new Commission with a new team of Commissioners will be in place bringing probably new ideas. The end of the year will be a key moment of discussion of the future programme for the generation 2021-2027.

The perspectives for sport are looking good. In its proposal for an Erasmus programme 2021-2027 including sport, the Commission has proposed to double the budget. The sport part of the programme should be much more open to international cooperation and should therefore open new possibilities for sport diplomacy.

THE CULTURAL OLYMPIAD AS A PLATFORM FOR CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND REPRESENTATION

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Senior Research Fellow in Communication Studies, University of Liverpool
Member of the European Capital of Culture Selection and Monitoring Panel
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Introduction

Cultural diplomacy as discourse and practice looms large today in both cultural policy studies and international relations. In effect, the term cultural diplomacy is very widely used, so much so that it has become a floating signifier, commonly deployed by foreign policy establishments and the arts and culture sector alike. Many of the ways in which the term itself is used go well beyond its original meaning, namely the processes that occur when formal diplomats, operating at the service and in the name of their governments, use cultural resources to help advance national interests. Earlier, analysts made a distinction between such governmentally driven cultural practice and the far less instrumental processes of international cultural relations, which are still based on flows of cultural exchange that take place naturally and organically, without government intervention.

While ever increasing numbers of political scientists and cultural analysts are researching cultural diplomacy, their attention is directed mainly at phenomena and processes taking place at the governmental level, between and among

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nation-states. However, special events such as the Olympic Games offer another significant platform for debating what we mean by cultural diplomacy.

This paper offers a reflection on the importance of artistic expression to advance cultural diplomacy, and the way this manifests in the context of the Olympic Games, in parallel to educational and sporting activities. Its main focus is a reflection on the value of the Cultural Olympiad for diplomacy and representation.

Background: Global aspirations and apolitical discourse

The Olympic Games are in an unrivalled position to promote particular images and narratives and make them recognisable worldwide. Projecting a global narrative about universal values was part of the Games mission for the founder, Pierre de Coubertin, but this mission has been appropriated by local hosts from the early days and extended in turn to showcase the place-specific values of cities and nations at a particular point in time (see the example of Berlin 1936,

below). The Games thus tend to act not as much as a platform for universal representation but, rather, as culturally-specific representations aimed at a global audience. In the latter role it has become apparent that the contribution of politicians, advertisers and media editors towards official narratives need to be complemented by a critically-informed lens capable of bringing to the fore the concerns of local populations, while fitting in with the event's festive framework. Kurin (2004) refers to "cultural scholars" but, in the context of the mega-event, I would also add artists as another important voice for cultural mediation and interpretation which can balance the needs to remain critical while engaging in the festive context. The section below discusses the role of the official cultural programme as an avenue to bring in scholars and artists to shape Olympic narratives.

The Olympic cultural programme as a platform for cultural diplomacy

The hosting of the Olympic Games incorporates well-known and extensively mediated cultural manifestations, namely the opening and closing ceremonies and the torch relay, all of which are heavily codified and regulated within IOC manuals as defining embodiments of Olympic ritual and protocol. In addition, the IOC also requires host cities to host a separate cultural programme, most often termed a Cultural Olympiad, which does not come with an associated manual and offers, instead, an opportunity for full appropriation and definition by respective hosts. In this paper, the reference to cultural programme relates to this later instance.

Certainly, an entry point to discussions about cultural representation at the Games is provided by examining the content of Olympic opening ceremonies, considered to be the single media event gathering the largest simultaneous global audience of them all (Tomlinson 1996, Hogan 2003). The opening ceremony acts as a platform to abridge the cultural narratives of host nation and host city, allowing the global media to digest and interpret them in what is considered to be a once in a lifetime chance for global projection. These ceremonies thus become iconic moments that can define the international perception of the Games host nation. For instance, in Beijing 2008, the 2008 military drummers became synonymous with China's power and efficiency at a time when the country was emerging as a global super power (Chen et al. 2012).

However, the approach to staging these ceremonies does not allow for an in-depth negotiation with local or national cultural stakeholders, nor marked integration with established cultural policies (see Forsyth 2002). Instead, they are often driven by a high-profile artistic director or team who will bring a singular vision to the content. Furthermore, they have become one of the most secretive elements of the Games hosting process, the currency of which is partly defined by their surprise value. They are also almost exclusively conceived to operate as a broadcast spectacle, thus dictated by the needs of global television[1]. In contrast, the official Olympic cultural programme, which has rarely achieved widespread media attention, becomes a platform for day-to-day negotiations and one of the few opportunities for some openness and inclusion leading to alternative narrative projections within the Games hosting process.

Key moments

Over the years, there have been some key moments of cultural representation within the Olympic Games that have emerged out of the cultural programme. What makes these moments distinct is the direct involvement of artists and cultural scholars who bring a historically informed and creative interpretation of the Games experience. This provides a marked contrast with the kind of representation statements emerging out of the sporting actions themselves – which tend to be interpreted exclusively by sport journalists; the commercial narrative produced by the Games corporate sponsors, and the narrative of local organisers and funders. While the latter commonly leads to standardised messages emphasising the popular jargon of the day, the intervention of artists and scholars provides an opportunity to depart from generalist and formulaic narratives to instead discover or shape future trends.

The range of moments selected here includes historically controversial and logistically unsuccessful examples as well as cases broadly viewed as a full achievement. They include top-down government-led commissions as well as community-led interventions aimed at achieving social change. They range

1. The ongoing trend to appoint film directors as the main creative force behind opening ceremonies (Zhang Yimou and Steven Spielberg for Beijing 2008, Danny Boyle for London 2012) attests to the importance of broadcast capture in the inception and development of the ceremonies narrative.

from overtly political to subtle socio-cultural statements involving a wide array of artistic practice, from film, to graphic design, public art, theatre, open air performance or digital media. They all share a capacity to give rise to iconic statements, recognisable by large sections of the local and national population and, in some cases, reaching out as international exemplars. They can all be considered defining examples of cultural representation at Games time.

Berlin 1936: Culture and art as propaganda

One of the earliest –and most dramatic– examples of an artist's contribution to iconic cultural representation during the Olympic Games emerges out of the controversial Berlin 1936 Games. Labelled as the Nazi Olympics due to them being hosted under Adolf Hitler's chancellorship and presenting clear marks of Nazi propaganda in their staging, these were the first Games to fully realise the potential of the Olympic cultural programme as a platform for cultural representation (Heinze 2005, 32). From an emphasis on spectacular architecture, to the first extensive programme for dressing of the city with a unified visual identity, and the creation of new Olympic rituals (the torch relay), this edition of the Games is full of iconic moments. Such moments were created in order to highlight Germany's cultural supremacy[2], but the techniques involved in their staging have been re-appropriated in subsequent Games in order to advance the internationalist agenda of the Olympic Movement.

The most iconic cultural product emerging out of this edition of the Games was the film *Olympia* by Leni Riefenstahl. Riefenstahl was commissioned by the Third Reich to produce the definitive film of the Berlin Games. The end result is a film that made an unprecedented use of technology to showcase aesthetics and meaning. Zisimopoulou and Fragkiadakis (2011) note that,

Olympia reconstructs Nazi space in time and forms a paragon of

2. The ideology of Arian supremacy was constantly challenged in the sporting arenas, notably through the outstanding performance of Black American athlete Jesse Owens. This presents, indeed, the ultimate paradox of the Games: no matter how sophisticated the techniques by organisers to control the Games narrative, the actual enactment of the event, from the sporting competitions to the uses of the street by diverse communities of interest has always provided opportunities to divert from or subvert the official narrative (see: Lenskyj 2006).

> *Nazi international propaganda in an impeccable aesthetic and style that originates from ancient Greek surviving predominating ideals. … Leni Riefenstahl creates an idealized architectural propaganda space of persuasion, filming events and bodies as architectural phenomena in a neo-classical stone background. The film of the 1936 Olympics is indeed the outcome of the interaction of power, architecture, media, beauty and aesthetics in … western culture.* (p. 169)

Despite heavy criticisms about its propaganda motivations, the film is praised as a piece of art that has influenced approaches to film making for generations to come and defined modern sport photography. The involvement of an artist in the production of the ultimate cultural product of these Games thus offers a dual platform for representation: on the one hand, its implicit political message, which has informed debate on the Nazi ideology; on the other, its aesthetics and supporting technological advancements, which have redefined photography and filmmaking and also shaped perceptions of Germany's cultural and artistic standing at the time.

Mexico 1968: Ahead of global artistic trends

Mexico in 1968 provides perhaps the best example of a cultural programme aimed at challenging pre-conceptions of the host nation and giving added credibility to an Olympic project which was otherwise doubted on by local and international commentators. Thus, rather than a marginal add-on as had been the case for most of the preceding editions (excepting Berlin), the programme was central to the Games narrative. The organising committee embarked on the most ambitious cultural programme to that date, lasting a whole year and documented extensively through their official final Games reports[3]. The Cultural Olympiad emphasised international connections and youth, it broke with traditional artistic boundaries by incorporating programmes on design, advertising, television and science (from genetics and biology, to nuclear energy

3. The two volumes of the Cultural Olympiad final report are available online: Volume IV part I (http://www.la84foundation.org/6oic/OfficialReports/1968/1968v4pt1.pdf) and Volume IV part II (http://www.la84foundation.org/6oic/OfficialReports/1968/1968v4pt2.pdf)

and outer space). Overall, the programme was a clear attempt at projecting Mexico as a sophisticated, outward looking cultural and creative centre. It also showcased its folklore and traditions but ensuring that such local roots were viewed through a contemporary lens and connected with broader international trends, so as to place Mexico on the global stage. It was also essential to present Mexico as a bridge-building nation, as discussed in more detail later. As remarked by Zolov (2004), the programme presented a

> *… vision of Mexico in which… international traditions demonstrated profound tolerance of political difference while … indigenous cultural traditions were framed by and interfaced seamlessly with a forward-looking embrace of modern values.* (p. 170)

The Cultural Olympiad was seen as a mark of maturity for Mexico. Zolov quotes the work of Rodriguez Kuri who notes that "[w]ith the Cultural Olympiad there is no promotional or celebratory trip, nor is this a manifestation of the desire – always hysterical, Freud *dixit* – to convince the others". In other words, Zolov (2004) adds,

> *the aesthetic and discursive aspects of preparation for the Olympics suggested a mature modernity, one no longer driven by the exigency of convincing the "other" … of Mexican capabilities…. [T]he celebration of the Olympics reflected a fundamental confidence in the nation's material accomplishments and sense of cosmopolitan belonging.* (p. 162)

An important cultural legacy from the programme was the advancement made in terms of graphic design. It is within the 1968 visual identity programme that we can appreciate the perfect fusion of local folklore and international avant-garde, and Mexico's confidence capturing mainstream media attention while remaining ahead of the trends. The comprehensive graphic design campaign ranged from the Games logo to the most extensive city dressing programme since Berlin 1936, and also involved a distinctive approach to staff uniform design which, Zolov argues, contributed to another core narrative for Mexico 1968: the "liberated" Mexican woman (2004, 177-8). The most remarkable attribute of the city look, not attempted since, was the decision to highlight a universal symbol, the dove of peace, rather than any local icon. Zolov remarks that the Mexico dove has become iconic in its own right, adding up to the other

two most famous representations, by Picasso or as depiction of the "Holy Spirit" (2004, 171). It is quite telling that Mexico's dove of peace is also considered the first Games 'mascot', as it clearly represents a sophisticated, while popular, icon, in stark contrast with the bland and infantilised look of most mascots since. The appropriation of the notion of 'peace' as a visual identity icon can also be considered a particularly subtle opportunity for political positioning – in this case, representing Mexico as a bridge-building nation. The message was prominent throughout the Games lead up, supported by the pervasive slogan "Everything is Possible in Peace" (Organising Committee of the Games of the XIX Olympiad 1969, 732).

The cultural Olympiad captured the imagination of the media as well as the local community and intellectual elites. It was hailed a great success and the best platform to overcome any concerns about Mexico's capacity to host the Games. However, youth unrest was on the rise and culminated on the eve of the Games with the massacre of unarmed protesters at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, which, from an international point of view, has become the most dominant part of this Games political narrative. In this context, a very telling factor, which epitomises the dual role played by the cultural programme as both officially sanctioned and fringe Olympic narrative is that the 'Cultural Olympiad directly incorporated many of the same intellectuals, artists, and even students who would later join the protest movement in denouncing the government' (Zolov 2004, 187). This is thus indicative of the programme's capacity to retain credibility amongst the intellectual classes and involve critical voices while trying to shape and inform the Games central narrative. It is when managing to play this dual role – a platform for informed criticism while attempting to influence and, at times, change official narratives – that the cultural programme has provided its most valuable contribution to advance political cultural representation during Games time.

Barcelona 1992: The city at the heart of the Games

For Barcelona, the Games were an important opportunity to showcase contemporary and democratic Spain. In particular, local hosts aspired to present Catalonia as a distinct nation and Barcelona as an open and cosmopolitan city. This was to move beyond the classic Spain stereotypes promoted by the Franco

regime, with its emphasis on Southern folklore such as flamenco and bullfighting. This commitment was made apparent in the choice of a local cartoonist (Javier Mariscal) to design the Games Olympic and Paralympic mascot which, diverting from the previous editions of the Games (Moscow, Los Angeles and Seoul, all promoting cuddly animals) projected a daring, quasi-abstract version of a pet that managed to fully encapsulate the distinct charisma of Barcelona.

The organisers committed to presenting the largest cultural event to date, this time making it last the four years of the Olympiad. The Cultural Olympiad had great ambition, but was overshadowed by the success of the city itself, with its public spaces becoming the most celebrated embodiment of the open and dynamic Barcelona narrative (Monclus 2003). In this sense, perhaps one of the most relevant dimensions of the Cultural Olympiad as a contributor to the city's cultural representation was its public art programme, including what have become iconic pieces around the city's newly revitalised seaside neighbourhood of Barceloneta. The underlying message for most key cultural artifacts presented in this Olympiad was that of a modern, European, urban hub – as opposed to the traditional, Iberian and often rural countryside representations of Spain.

Sydney 2000: Aboriginal reconciliation

The bidding process for Sydney 2000 represents one of the clearest recent examples of a covert political campaign via its cultural proposition. Like Barcelona, Sydney proposed a four-year Cultural Olympiad and prepared a separate cultural bid book to present its story. The city was competing with the then favourite, Beijing, in the wake of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre which highlighted ongoing human right abuses in China and put public opinion on edge. For Sydney and Australia, it was thus imperative to work on their own human right perception issues. The key issue to advance on was the treatment of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, followed by better recognition of its many ethnic communities. The cultural programme was the main vehicle to express Sydney's commitment towards a more progressive agenda, and the key terms promoted at the heart of its bid cultural section were reconciliation and multiculturalism (Garcia 2012).

Meekison (2000) and Heinz Housel (2007) note how mainstream aspects of the 2000 Games narrative fell short of delivering a credible platform for

Aboriginal representation, from the choice of logo (a stylised version of an Aboriginal boomerang) to the choice of opening ceremony narrative (seen through the eyes of a white little girl, embodying a young Australia for whom its Aboriginal communities are a remote source of fascination). Scholars have highlighted how these items were still presented through a white sense of aesthetics (ibid.), with little direct ownership from aboriginal groups. In contrast, the cultural programme provided an unprecedented platform for Aboriginal expression and occupation of the mainstream narrative in their own terms. This was the major achievement of "The Festival of The Dreaming", the first large-scale festival directed by and fully dedicated to contemporary aboriginal artists in Australia.

Meekison notes how,

> *The Festival of the Dreaming stands in contrast to other representations of Indigenous culture within [the organising committee for the Games]. First, it was under the direction of an Indigenous person. … [D]espite the awesome bureaucracy of SOCOG [the organising committee], Indigenous voices were able to come to the fore. And, in addition to the performances themselves, these voices were heard in newspaper articles, radio broadcasts, television interviews, and Festival specials on [national TV channels] SBS and ABC.* (2000, 125)

National media reporting on the significance of this festival to place contemporary aboriginal culture at the very centre of Australia's national and international arts agenda was extensive throughout 1996 and during the Olympic year in 2000. This stands in contrast to other Games related narratives and is again a clear example of the differences between the Cultural Olympiad and other iconic Olympic programmes in their capacity to protect local sensitivities and allow direct ownership by diverse communities. While Sydney's cultural programme broke with many tokenistic conventions, the opening ceremony and Games merchandise failed to overcome established stereotypes. Given the lack of international media attention for this cultural programme, however, achievements in this area did not immediately reach out to international audiences. Australia's cultural representation advancements have, instead, developed slowly over subsequent years, thanks to changes introduced within the country's approach to cultural policy, which affords greater visibility and

international touring support towards contemporary aboriginal and other ethnically diverse artistic groups.

Vancouver: Social media art + activism

By the time of Vancouver 2010, opportunities for cultural representation via a mega-event have been revolutionised. The advent of new technologies, the web 2.0 and social media generation has opened wide the channels for narrative construction and placed upside down the carefully developed framework for national and international Games broadcast intermediation. Although it is not possible to dismiss the importance of mainstream and official media narratives, many of the issues raised by Klausen and Moragas in the 1990s are being challenged and, in some cases, have been overcome.

As discussed by Miah & Garcia (2008) the rise of the 'citizen journalist' provides an important way forward for diverse and community-led cultural representation and opens up many avenues to document and share aspects of the Games, such as the cultural programme, that had struggled to be part of the global media narrative. For Vancouver's Cultural Olympiad, the online digital dimension was considered essential, not only for the sharing of messages but for their creation. This was the basis for CODE (Cultural Olympiad Digital Edition), which included a central programme of renowned artists experimenting with technology, a web-based national programme to capture people's views of themselves as Canadians, and the route into a wide range of partnerships with small media art groups[4]. The latter tested the limits of what could be considered official or fringe activity at the Games.

Grassroots organisations such as W2 in Vancouver, which were officially included in the Cultural Olympiad programme as a public art site, developed a parallel programme of meetings and community sessions highlighting the most controversial aspects of the Games hosting process: from the treatment of homeless people (a homeless camp was established just outside their venue and was the first thing any W2 international guests would notice) to the response by

4. See http://www.canadacode.ca/ and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Olympiad_Digital_Edition (last accessed July 2012).

police to wider local demonstrations[5]. Throughout, the Vancouver Games were framed by extensive cultural, social and political activism with many notable contributors having links to the official cultural programme in their roles as artists and public intellectuals. Although the most politicised cultural activities taking place over this time have not become part of the official package collected and kept by the IOC as a record of the Cultural Olympiad, they are all easily found online and difficult to distinguish from officially branded Olympic culture. This is a clear case of the fringe infiltrating mainstream cultural narratives, and of the Olympic cultural programme opening the door to such growing linkages and synergies.

London: Culture as motor of economic growth... while changing the world?

London launched its Cultural Olympiad in 2008 and completed it with the London 2012 Festival, which has its own distinct look and feel. Since the bid stage, London's narrative for the Games built extensively on the rhetoric of it being a world-class city, a hub for world leading creative industries and a gateway into the rest of the UK's distinct cultural offer. This narrative brought strong economic undertones, presenting culture as the UK's most desirable economic asset and the way forward at a time of global financial crisis. However, there were two other core underlying narratives: one around the ambition to drive social change by transforming perceptions of disability and providing greater opportunities for direct contributions from and access to activity by disabled communities; the other around investment in and celebration of youth, by focusing on the display of emerging talent and on presenting work that engages the new generation. The main London 2012 tagline, profiled throughout Olympic venues and Games promotional literature was "Inspire a generation".

London 2012 four year Cultural Olympiad involved dedicated teams in every UK nation and region, thus creating an additional layer to the narrative: a commitment to nation-wide representation, in particular, giving a voice to each nation – England as well as Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, and

5. See W2 vision for the Olympics at: http://www.creativetechnology.org/page/w2-culturemedia-house-2 (last accessed June 2012).

providing opportunities for the iconic representation of each area in a way that contributes to the Games final imagery. The development of an extensive outdoor cultural programme profiling distinct natural and urban landscapes has been an important vehicle to achieve this ambition.

By the end of the Games, the Cultural Olympiad had helped advance a narrative of nation-wide collaboration, credible amongst its producers and associated policy makers though not widely visible to the average citizen due to limited media coverage. In addition, the London 2012 Festival contributed to projecting the country's creative industries with its emphasis on film, comedy, music, design and fashion, highlighting aspects of the city and country's cultural production that had not been as prominent within any given Games since Mexico 1968. National media acknowledged the programme's emphasis on youth, and the dedication to bringing the disability arts movement to the mainstream. Finally, social media platforms played an important role to generate excitement and a close follow-up by communities of interest, as well as facilitate contestation.

Overall, an important step forward by London which shaped these Games' global representation was a more holistic approach to its constructed narrative, one where the vision for the Cultural Olympiad –as well as every other London 2012 programme in education, volunteering etc– was supported by the Games wider visual identity. This is a return to some of the trends advanced in the 1960s and 1970s, where pictograms, colour patterns and slogans corresponded with the main principles behind the cultural programme. Further, for the first time, its opening ceremony departed from all its predecessors by incorporating humour and an explicit celebration of activism and radical youth culture in its staging, rather than relying solely on the display of traditional and contemporary mainstream culture. Combined, this brought an important opportunity for London to transmit an overarching message (youth culture, commitment to social change) that was supported by every aspect of the Games staging process, and where the opportunities for inclusion and diversity afforded by a flexible four-year nation-wide programme, linked up with (rather than contradict) the message emerging out of the Games most media-oriented, London-centric and globalised statements.

Conclusions

The Games offer an important platform for representation and cultural diplomacy due to their status as a world stage with simultaneous global outreach and the capacity to generate iconic moments that become embedded in the collective memories of whole generations. However, many of the most well recognised or iconic dimensions of the Games –from the sport competitions to the ceremonies and torch relay– limit the opportunities for true representation due to excessive regulation, commercialism and the pressures to be outward facing and broadcast-friendly. The latter tends to involve an emphasis on capturing the interest of a loosely defined global audience often at the expense of stronger connections with the event's immediate local communities of interest.

The Olympic cultural programme or Cultural Olympiad remains the least regulated aspect of the Games hosting process as it has, so far, not become a high value media asset compared with the sports. This brings some challenges for visibility and acknowledgement of worth, but also opportunities for more diverse and meaningful representation. The programme allows more flexible venues for community inclusion, including a larger period of time to conceive, develop and showcase activity; far wider opportunities for geographical outreach; and virtually no limits in terms of thematic focus.

The involvement of artists and creative entrepreneurs also bring additional opportunities for more precise and accurate, sensitive, innovative or even challenging forms of representation. This is an important complement to the mainstream Olympic discourse which, in its search for efficiency and easy international appreciation, involves a heavily standardised look and narrative, resulting in what could be considered as a "non-place" (Augé 1995) Olympic city feel. Thus, despite many limitations, some of the best examples of meaningful and sustainable cultural representation at the Games emerge out of the Cultural Olympiad and Olympic Arts Festivals rather than their more widely recognised counterparts.

In this paper, I have focused on cultural programme moments that have contributed in some way to defining a part of the Games' collective narrative over time. Many more examples exist, but a large majority have remained locked within their immediate communities of interest, are poorly documented and often not directly associated with the Olympic Games experience. This makes them very difficult to track down, particularly in the pre-digital era.

They constitute a considerable part of the untold story of the Olympics and an essential dimension to revisit if we are to fully understand the event's explicit and (most importantly) implicit political significance. This is clearly an area that needs to be further researched.

In an extremely competitive media-event environment, the future of the Games as the largest of them all relies in great part in the event's ability to keep connecting with new generations and renewing the credibility of its status as more than just a sporting event. The Olympic Movement has tried to maintain the illusion that this is an event deeply rooted in universal values developed over more than a century, but such message is only likely to remain credible if new generations feel in some way represented by the event and its projected narrative and believe it is more than a clever marketing campaign. The cultural programme, independent artists and creators have made important contributions to tell, contextualise, contest or challenge the stories of those directly involved or touched by the experience, be it as athletes, spectators, organisers, funders or media. However, the programme can only continue to play a significant role offering opportunities for meaningful representation if it retains the kinds of freedoms, flexibility in implementation and opportunity to challenge mainstream narratives that have been common during its decades of development at the fringes of the Games global media story. In an environment where global success requires an avoidance of overt political claims, cultural programming can play an essential role to put forward important, politically informed messages that are at the same time palatable to audiences worldwide and thus capable of infiltrating the mainstream Games narrative.

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SPORT AND AN ACTIVE SOCIETY WITHOUT WALLS. SOCIAL INCLUSION OF REFUGEES THROUGH SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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A short introduction

> *Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles. The Olympic Movement works year-round to promote Olympism and use sport as an agent for positive social change around the world. The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.*
>
> www.olympic.org/the-ioc/promote-olympism

Since 2015 Greece has been faced with an unprecedented situation. On one hand, the continuing deep economic and political crisis and on the other hand the dramatic rise in the number of refugees arriving in the country. In Nagy's (2018) words *"during the past decade, Greece has become the center of international attention in connection with the two crises that are both also local variations of wider global problems. First, being hit hard by the financial crisis and subsequent austerity measures, present-day Greece can be taken as*

a case of a country in chronicity, where crisis has become normalized. Second, as a consequence of interrelated international phenomena, Greece witnessed an increase in immigration, and the EU-Turkey deal of 2016 created a bottlenecked country, where presently about 65,000 refugees wait in so-called frozen transience".

At the same time, in October 2015, at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, confronted with the global refugee crisis that has seen an estimated 68.5 million people in the world displaced, IOC President Thomas Bach announced the creation of the Refugee Olympic Team –the first of its kind– to take part in the Olympic Games Rio 2016.

Ten months on from the announcement, the ten athletes, who originally hailed from Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, were competing alongside 11,000 fellow athletes in Brazil, sending a message of hope and inclusion to millions of refugees around the world and inspiring the world with the strength of their human spirit. www.olympic.org/the-ioc/promote-olympism

The current migration crisis has become a highly sensitive political issue that calls for an urgent EU and member state level response. The challenges that this crisis carries are diverse, with the re-settlement of people a priority equal with the need to ensure their longer-term inclusion and integration into hosting societies. The integration and social inclusion of refugees and migrants into European society, therefore, represents one of the most serious problems facing the EU at the present time (European Commission's Report, 2016). At the same time, there is a growing interest in the use of the social potential of sport as a tool to promote social inclusion, integration and equal opportunities. The EU White Paper on Sport (2007) states that *"Sport can… facilitate the integration into society of migrants and persons of foreign origin as well as support inter-cultural dialogue".* It should be noted though that sport, cannot be seen isolated from other socio-cultural spheres as both refugees and hosting societies have more complex and overlapping issues to deal with that sport-related intervention has limited power to address. A holistic perspective with the involvement of multiple actors is therefore needed. As Schulenkorf (2010) argued, it is too much to expect sporting events to have an impact on social relations without the support and contribution of other contextual actors, such as local and national political parties and social partners. Sport should be only a part in a much wider network of agents dealing with the problems of the targeted group.

Social inclusion of refugees through sport and physical activity

The important role of a broader social network of agents for the effective provision of interventions in this area provides the basis for Coalter and Taylor's (2010) distinction between "plus sport" and "sport plus" initiatives. According to the authors, plus sport initiatives are led by social development organisations dealing with particular social issues. Sports activities *are added* on to their programmes as a way of achieving their broader social objectives. Sport plus activities, on the other hand, are led by sport organisations, where sports is used and adapted in various ways to achieve certain social development objectives.

A helpful interpretation of the plus sport/sport plus classification for the purpose of the present paper is "inclusion through sport" and "inclusion in sport".

Even though the IOC's Sport and Active Society Commission's theme explicitly calls for *"Social inclusion of refugees through sport and physical activity"* a clarification of terms is needed as the basis for our discussion. Inclusion in sport mainly refers to the introduction of underrepresented groups, refugees in our case, to sport and facilitation of the capacity to act within sport. It calls for regular, long-term participation in sports and an improvement of athletic skills and achievements. It is based on the premise that participation in sport activities already represents a case of inclusion. Inclusion through sport, on the other hand, refers to athletic processes that empower individuals by allowing them to gain experience and acquire skills by participation in sport, which they can transfer to other social contexts, such as schools, workplaces and communities, etc. According to Hartman and Kwak, (2011), participation in sport and physical activity can serve as a vehicle to improve social and professional skills and also as a tool to increase educational attainment. It is believed to confer life skills, social knowledge, values and leadership qualities. Regular participation in sport is expected to help young people of immigrant origin to develop key skills and to integrate more successfully into hosting societies. But, at the same time, sport can equally be a setting for extreme nationalism, exclusion and discrimination particularly with respect to gender, social class, race/ethnicity, physical ability and/or sexual orientation. Sport not only creates bonds but also differentiates (Sport facing the test of cultural diversity, 2010). It seems that sport has the power to break down walls but also to build them. This

presentation will explore the ambivalent potentials of sport by focusing on three "W- questions":

1. What are the benefits of participation in and through sport for refugees and hosting societies?
2. What are the walls to participation?
3. What kind of sport and physical activity contribute to breaking the walls?

Benefits of participation into and through sport and physical activity

Before focusing on the benefits of and barriers to participation in sports and physical activity, let us have a closer look at the term. Sporting Equals in their guide on "Equality and Human Rights in Sport and Physical Activity" identify six "key equality groups or strands" in need of access to equal participation: gender, ethnicity, disability, age, faith and sexual orientation. Possible combinations of these (for example, refugee women, or disabled elderly etc.) pose additional challenges. A lot of work has been done both by individual as well as state initiatives to promote sport participation with a special focus on one or more of the strands mentioned.

But what do we mean by active participation? Is access to sport sufficient to guarantee active participation? To answer this question, we need to look at the three dimensions of participation. Participation is indeed a condition. But at the same time, it is, or rather should be, a value and a social skill (Move and Learn. Training manual). As a basic condition, it implies available, accessible and affordable participation for everyone. As a value, participation is a developed, internalised attitude that motivates people to provide the conditions for participation by all. It is something that you strive for not because it is the politically correct thing to do or the policy of the organisation you work for but an inner disposition, a worldview, a belief. As a social skill, active participation transcends the realm of sports, empowering citizens for an active role in a democratic society and allowing refugees to create conditions for participation in other aspects of their lives. This should also include opportunities for refugees to pursue a career in the sport realm should they wish for one. Inclusion in and through sport should not be confined to participation as an athlete. Underrepresented groups need role models in the broader area of sport including trainers, coaches, sport managers, sport journalists. An illustrative

example of good practice is provided by the SPIN Women project which is designed towards this direction. It addresses this need by enhancing the participation of migrant and minority women and girls in sport and recreational physical activities. It aims to show the different perspectives of migrant and ethnic minority women and to develop strategies to increase their involvement in sports. This includes capacity-building and empowerment components that increase the qualification and skills of both female sport actors and multipliers (coaches, administrators, referees etc.). https://sportinclusion.net/news/news-events/news/detail/News/breaking-down-barriers-for-women-in-sport/

Why though would refugees want to engage and participate in sports? While I was trying to organise our first Erasmus+ sport for refugees in the Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs three years ago, I was repeatedly asked this question. Everyone understood that refugees needed education. But many people questioned their participation in sport while there were more urgent, vital issues and services to be provided by a state institution. *"Isn't sport a luxury for someone with more substantial, basic needs"?* Let us skip the often mentioned and generally accepted health and psychosocial benefits that sport and physical activity offer for all who regularly participate, and look at some additional positive effects for refugees and the hosting societies:

Individual gains: refugees can learn how to manage stress efficiently and to release their emotions (aggressions, frustrations, etc.) safely. Sports teach self-control and self-discipline, enhance life quality and wellbeing and create a sense of personal identity. Sport provides a positive way to spend free time – as refugees often lack positive outlets for their energy and positive environments where they can enjoy themselves and have fun. In addition, sport, leisure and play can have restorative and healing qualities for the psychological rehabilitation of refugees (particularly unaccompanied children and teenagers) not only because play is therapeutic, but also because play is an inherent part of traditions and community and can create a sense of normalcy for people living in extraordinary situations (UNHCR, 1994).

The value of sport and games for resilience in contexts of high risk and/or ongoing physical and psychological stress (e.g. refugee camps), and the restorative value for children and youth who have experienced traumatic events (e.g. natural disaster, war, forced migration) is well documented in the work of Holly Thorpe (2016).

Social gains: refugees who participate in sports and physical activity tackle

isolation, build social networks and create a sense of belonging. Sport offers them a fun alternative to inactivity, boredom, and, in more extreme cases, to filling in time in order to reduce the incidence of negative anti-social activities (e.g. substance abuse, delinquency, criminal activity, etc.).

Community gains: sport and physical activity function as a vehicle of communication between refugees and host communities as they provide an icebreaking effect. They are a non-threatening way to bring people into direct contact with people from other groups and cultures and thereby work against racism and xenophobia. Sport and physical activity can provide structure as even the simplest sport activity is defined by some kind of framework or rules. Sport activities help young people learn to follow procedures and rules and to deal with authority.

Walls to participation of refugees into sport

The benefits from sport and physical activity depend on access to such participation which is not often the case for refugees. It is not the aim of the present paper to identify all possible barriers that have been set up to exclude or discourage refugees from sport and physical activity but rather to outline indicators to help practitioners better understand, develop and support initiatives that promote refugee participation in sport and physical activity. Broad categories include cultural, practical and financial and personal barriers (Schwenzer, 2017, Block, 2017, Morgan, 2008).

Cultural barriers

- Lack of culturally-appropriate programmes.
- Difficulties in linking culturally-targeted programmes with mainstream programmes and competitions.
- Linguistic difficulties.
- Lack of knowledge of systems, gender norms, and competing family priorities – with parents preferring their children to focus on education.

Especially for girls and women additional barriers may include:

- Much greater parental and/or husband control than for males by attaching

greater importance to "izzat" (need to uphold the family's status and honour).
- More parental and/or husband apprehensions about any out-of-home activity, including sport, in which their daughters/wives are unsupervised or which would bring them into direct contact with the opposite sex.
- Heighten parents/husbands' fears about females' out of home activities due to experiences of racism at school, work and "on the streets".

Practical and financial barriers

- Cost of sport and physical activity
- Lack of appropriate or affordable transport
- Lack of resources and facilities
- Lack of childcare
- Concerns about personal safety in the activity
- Non-inclusive policies, processes and procedures
- Prejudice and discriminatory practice

Personal barriers

The refugees' living circumstances

As a rule, refugees encounter an unstable situation. During asylum procedures, their residency status is still undetermined. Migrants who have no legal right to stay and no chance to be recognised as refugees or asylum seekers face an even more precarious situation. In some countries (Greece, Italy, Portugal), many refugees are in transit, planning to continue their journey to Northern Europe. These aspects can impede a continuous participation in sporting activities.

The legal situation of refugees

Sports instructors often lack a sound knowledge on the legal situation of refugees, including information on the different stages of asylum procedures, restrictions on their freedom of movement and insurance and liability issues which has certain implications for participation in sporting activities.

Different experiences and expectations

Refugee status is no strictly defined category. It is not an identity. It is a status. Some refugees may regard playing sports as a leisure activity, whereas others that have already reached a competitive level want to further improve their performance and establish themselves in professional sports. Sometimes, their expectations regarding a career in professional sports are unrealistic, as they do not match the opportunities in the host country.

Overcoming the barriers to break the walls

It would take a book rather than a short article to tackle the issue of how to overcome the barriers. These barriers obstruct creation of conditions for meaningful, active participation of both refugees and members of the hosting or even transit societies. We have all read or heard that when people practice sports and play games they practice essential social skills such as cooperation and leadership, they develop character traits such as perseverance and courage, and they come to embrace values such as loyalty and fairness. However, how often has this ethical awareness and development been taken into consideration when designing PE curricula, sport intervention, or athletic programmes? Typically, notions such as "teamwork" and "fair play" are left vague and regarded as incidental (Butler, 2013).

For a more reflected approach it is necessary to consider the pedagogical as well as the psychosocial dimensions of sport and physical activity and how to incorporate them when designing an initiative or intervention. Hartman, D. and Kwak, C. (2011) argue that the success of any sport-related social intervention programme is largely determined by the strength of its non-sport components – of what it does within participants once they have been brought into the programme through sport. Clearly defining the objectives of your intervention is a good start. What are the life skills, the social knowledge, the values that you want to promote and develop? Is social change and transformation within the goals of your intervention? Or is the sport programme itself your main objective? Answering these questions is no issue of right or wrong, as they are intended to help you clarify the priorities before you attempt to optimise the social potential of sport and physical activity programmes. If you wish to proceed in this way, manuals such as *Move and Learn* can be a great assistance

as they offer a comprehensive overview of the educational approach of sport (ETS), Education Through Sports.

However, if the objective is to support the psychosocial well-being of the participants then the development and implementation of the intervention may be more ambitious and complex and valuable insights and examples can be found in Moving Together, a manual on promoting psychosocial well-being through sport and physical activity. Psychosocial support is an approach that aims to promote the resilience of individuals, groups and communities in crisis and is of particular value to groups like refugees. It includes a broad variety of interventions to strengthen the resources of individuals, families or groups as well as the community as a whole. It helps people to overcome adversities, bringing them back to normality and recovery after crisis. In 2007 a group of experts agreed on five intervention principles to guide practice in relation to crisis events. These principles have become known as "the Hobfoll principles" and state that psychosocial intervention must focus on the promotion of:

1. A sense of safety
2. Calming
3. A sense of self and collective efficacy
4. Connectedness
5. Hope

The principles address activities that are inclusive, holistic and playful and focus primarily on participation instead of performance. They focus on the shared experience of playing sports and are not geared towards any achievement. The "Sport Welcomes Refugees, A guide to good practices" created by SPIN (Sport Inclusion Network) gives ample practical examples and guidelines. In the realm of competitive sport, according to the "Implementation Guide for Integration of Refugees Through Sport. #PlayTogether", this objective may be achieved by encouraging modified sport activities and team building activities to enable participants to work towards a common goal. Generations for Peace provides an illustrative example of the way sport is used for peace building in communities. GFP was founded as a pilot initiative of the Jordan Olympic Committee back in 2007 for the inclusion of refugee children and is the only peace-through-sport organisation officially recognised by the International Olympic Committee. https://www.generationsforpeace.org/en/

Actions and Practical Recommendations

Given the complexity of the issue of refugees' participation in physical education and sport, and considering the outcomes of recent and current interventions we may conclude that action is required on the three broad levels of policy and strategy, on the professional and institutional, and on the personal and social levels (Kirk, 2012).

- Actions on the policy and strategy level include, for example, the development of guidelines and in some cases legislation, investment in physical and human resources, and reference to international agreements and declarations. Government education and sport ministries have an important role to play in making policy, providing funding, monitoring the implementation of initiatives and, in some cases, making or changing laws. NGOs have played an important role at this level and should continue to do so. Universities' potential to play a key role in this process has to date remained underdeveloped. Since they possess the capacity for knowledge generation and transmission, and also exist within international networks and communities, they are well suited to engage in policy and strategy level action. Coordinated action among

organisations at the policy level is vitally important to increase influence and sustainability of initiatives.

- Actions at the professional and institutional level focus on the professional development of teachers, coaches and other sports leaders and the planning of high-quality physical education programmes in schools and related community sport programmes. The coordination of actions at this level is of crucial importance, in particular between the professional development of teachers, coaches and leaders, and designing curricula, as well as the alignment with actions on policy, strategy, personal and social levels.
- Actions on the personal and social level include the personal and social spheres, which are strongly interdependent. Research suggests that the most important personal psychological factors are motivation, perception of competence and self-identity and biological factors of motor competence and physical fitness. In the social sphere, social relationships within the family, the peer group and between teachers and pupils in the classroom establish the climate in which personal factors are nurtured. While the quality of teachers and of physical education and sport programmes are considered at the professional and institutional level, it may be relevant in some circumstances to inform families through education programmes at the personal and social level.

Media and campaigning is important to run parallel with the actions in order to ensure:

- Awareness-raising coverage that does not reproduce prejudice and stereotyping, and report success and positive stories to provide a balanced perception of vulnerable and under-privileged groups.
- Reporting on the benefits of sport for development issues and making information accessible, especially to marginalised groups.

To achieve this, a strategy in needed to build media capacity by training and sensitizing journalists in the area of anti-discrimination through sport (See in: "Sport in Post-Conflict Societies" Council of Europe, 2011).

Developments in sport and physical education programmes tend to be one-off and ad hoc events. Therefore, action at all three levels is important. To achieve widespread, regular, beneficial and sustainable participation, no level can be omitted. A significant challenge is to align actions across each of these levels as well as coordinate actions within levels.

Physical activity and social recreational sport alone are valuable for anyone taking part. But through utilising the situations and settings of sport and physical activity for processes of learning and the development of an open pluralistic, democratic society, sport adds a new valuable dimension – in fact, it adds both value and values.

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THE OLYMPIC GAMES AND PEACE

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In the first place, the notion of peace is a personal, community affair. It is related to a person's aspiration to live in a spirit of peace through reconciliation and through a disassociation from all forms of violence, disdaining prejudice and injustice, and respecting dignity, rights and the personal freedom of the individual[1].

Secondly, the notion of peace is commonly related to the absence of war, with a memorandum of understanding aimed at progress between the sides involved and is a state, institutional and social concern.

In addition, the perception of peace is an individual, subjective state of spiritual and psychological tranquility and calm, unperturbed by anxiety.

All individuals, depending on their socio-ideological and cultural environment as well as their psychological character, impart a qualitive priority to some form of peace. Of course, each of the above forms of peace presupposes a variety of educational and cultural methods of action. We should therefore be asking what forms of peace sport and the Olympic Movement can promote in a complementary way.

One of the oldest, historical references to this subject was the establishment of the Olympic Truce as an agreement between the sovereign cities of the

1. Nissiotis, N., "The Olympic Movement's contribution to peace", *25th Session (Ancient Olympia 4-19 July 1985),* IOA, Lausanne [1986], p. 55.

Professor Konstantinos Georgiadis gave a lecture on the idea of Peace within the context of the Olympic Games.

Peloponnese in Ancient Greece[2]. The institution, established in accordance with the divine command of Apollo, would help the region's inhabitants to avoid famine and civil war[3]. The idea and establishment of the Olympic Truce was prophetic as an expedient for the development of progress and spiritual enlightenment. The act, a contractual agreement between cities recorded on the surface of a Discus –the Discus of Iphitos– constituted a source of law in that it prescribed rules which the parties agreed to follow[4].

Today, such an agreement would be known as an international memorandum of understanding, directly connected to the staging of the sporting and cultural event of the Olympic Games.

The establishment of the Olympic Truce contributed to the Pan-Peloponnese

2. Pausanias, *Ellados Perihghsis, Books 4, 5, 6, Messhniaka kai Hliaka*, Ekdotike Athenon S.A., Athens, 1991, A, IV, 5.
3. Pausanias, Ellados Perihghsis, *op. cit.*, A, IV, 6.
4. Panagiotopoulos, D. P., *Dikaio ton Olympiakon Agonon* (The Law of the Olympic Games), Athens-Komotini, 1991, p. 29.

character of the Games. As Plutarch noted, "The idea of the Olympic Truce was conceived by a gentle person familiar with peace"[5]. The idea of Truce is also presented as an educational path to peace.

On a practical level, this was a unique opportunity every four years for the representatives or theories to debate amongst themselves. Thus, they declared their option for reconciliation and a wish to distance themselves from all forms of violence, respecting the freedom and dignity of other representatives. Suspension of the death penalty and an amnesty for exiles for the duration of the Olympic Truce in Ancient Greece were further acts promoting human magnanimity.

The Truce, which constituted, during the year, a period of calm and a "peaceful approach", has become, for all people of good faith, a symbol for seeking a continuing and lasting peace.

Together with the celebration of the Olympic Games, the Truce has been established as an investigative educational procedure for the resolution of differences through dialogue. Dialogue and shared life experiences strengthen personal trust, and trust in general, between representatives. Hence, the institution cultivates mutual respect as well as democratic awareness. For this reason, "The Truce finally becomes a school of peace for the Ancient Greeks"[6] and the **gymnikoi agones** (naked games) a school of democracy[7].

This two-way relationship between sport and peace was one of the principal reasons for the revival of the Olympic Games[8]. The restoration of the Olympic Games as a constituent element of humanism and enlightenment in Europe encompasses the ideological spirit of classical education, social justice and the construction of a peaceful, global community founded on human dignity without discrimination.

The Olympic Games address the emotions and logic of a person struggling for the ideal balance between the two, which is why "Coubertin believed that the direct results of sports encounters are stronger than the rational substance

5. Plutarch (2008), *Vioi Paralliloi* (in Greek), (ed) Zitros, Athens, XX III.
6. Nissiotis, "The Olympic Movement's contribution to peace", *op. cit.,* p. 57.
7. Christesen, P., *Sport and Democracy in the Ancient and Modern Worlds,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
8. Georgiadis, K., *Olympic Revival,* Ekdotike Athenon, Athens 2003.

of political conventions"[9]. Coubertin himself publicly endorsed the standpoint of pacifists in France, and for this reason, at the founding Congress of the IOC in 1894, appointed as honorary president the pacifist Baron De Coursel, who in turn "characterised the IOC as the foundation of peace"[10].

Coubertin maintained that sport contributes to reconciliation between peoples and not their assimilation. In addition, a balance is created between love of motherland and love of humanity[11].

International meetings within the Olympic Movement also cultivate mutual respect for common rules and the creation of a peaceful disposition as a means to progress. The idea of reconciliation through sport is related firstly to a revised framework of education about human rights, human dignity and improvement of the individual through effort.

In 1889, Coubertin attended the Peace Congress, organised at the same time as the Paris Exposition, researching the subject of Peace in relation to school education and sport[12]. In 1935, after 41 years of involvement in the Olympic Movement, he still had difficulty answering the question whether sport is a "peace maker" on the political world map.

He clearly did not wish to give a political response to the question, knowing that at that precise time exclusion of Jews from the Berlin Olympic Games was being debated. Later the same year, he wrote: "To demand that people should love one another is simply childish. To demand that people should respect one another is not utopian, but in order for them to respect one another they must first get to know one another"[13].

In relation to the mission of New-Olympism and the significance of the Olympic Games, Coubertin referred to another dimension. Borrowing the words of his spiritual father, Henri Didon: "I never worry when people talk", Coubertin proclaimed the significance of the Games for the promotion of dialogue and democratic consciousness between citizens the world over.

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9. Quanz, D., "The Formative Power of the IOC's Founding: The Birth of a New Peace Movement", *IOA Report of the 34th Session (18 July-2 August 1994, Ancient Olympia),* Lausanne, IOC/IOA, 1995, p. 124.
10. Quanz, "The Formative Power of the IOC's Founding", *op. cit.,* p. 122.
11. Georgiadis, Revival, *op. cit.,* pp. 93-94.
12. *Pierre de Coubertin 1863-1937, Olympism, Selected Writings,* N. Müller (Ed.), Lausanne, IOC, 2000, p. 135.
13. Coubertin, Selected Writings, *op. cit.,* p. 583.

Elite athletes are called upon to contribute to social peace, since they are prudent, strong and energetic; it is not enough for someone to be a leading athlete, Coubertin wrote, concluding: "These members of the elite must also be knights"[14].

According to this assertion, elite athletes indicate the road to surpassing oneself through struggle, effort, persistence and hard work – factors necessary for achieving distinction. They become role models capable of recognising society's needs and problems more easily in order to contribute to its progress. Athletes as role models convey principles and values to the public, and thus sport acts as a special bridge in the education process.

Today, the Olympic Charter contains important references to the relationship between sports education and peace. As stated in the Olympic Charter:

> *Fundamental Principle 2. "The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity"*[15].
> *Chapter 1.1. "The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced in accordance with Olympism and its values"*[16].

In July 2000, to promote the role of the Olympic Movement, former President of the IOC Juan Antonio Samaranch and Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs George Papandreou inaugurated the International Olympic Truce Centre in Athens, with its symbolic headquarters at the International Olympic Academy in Ancient Olympia. The ambition of the Truce Foundation is to secure, in cooperation with the IOC and the United Nations the cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Olympic Games. After eight years of effort by the then President of the Foundation Juan Antonio Samaranch, leaders from 180 countries signed the United Nations declaration for a truce over the period of the Olympic Games.

The endeavour has borne fruit, since we have specific examples of the Truce being observed, as in Bosnia during the 1994 Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer. Two years earlier, the Olympic Movement welcomed South Africa

14. Coubertin, Selected Writings, *op. cit.,* pp. 581, 269, 275, 553.
15. IOC, *Olympic Charter* (in force as from 9 October 2018), p. 11.
16. IOC, *Olympic Charter* (in force as from 9 October 2018), p. 15.

into its ranks with a team composed of both black and white athletes. Nelson Mandela's presence at the Games was a symbolic act of reconciliation after a long struggle for human rights. Sport was an important means for the resolution of conflict and the establishment of peace in South Africa after apartheid.

Another example is that of the two female shooters, Nino Salukvadze of Georgia and Natalia Paderina of Russia, who, at the Beijing Games, after receiving their medals and at a time when their countries were at war, embraced on the podium. That example will long remain in our memories. Once again, they showed the world that youth is longing for peace.

Peace Education as part of Olympic Education

Olympism is an educational philosophy based on the ideas of the modern Olympic Movement, innovative proposals for the educational value of sport and values inspired by the ancient Olympic Games.

The educational philosophy of Olympism rests on three pillars: sport, culture and education for the creation of a better and more peaceful world.

Over recent decades, an ever-increasing emphasis has been placed on the need for closer ties between schools and society. Responding to this need "Olympic education" is an educational process cultivating physical abilities, social skills, moral principles and the development of aesthetic awareness. An educational process of humanitarian awakening is proposed, through new methodologies and lessons incorporated into or combined with physical education, aimed at developing life skills, moral education, gender equality, protection of the environment, fight against racism, respect for refugees, etc.

In the past, the IOA, in collaboration with the IOC, has organised on its premises educational seminars for children from areas of conflict to aid their psychological rehabilitation. The results have been impressive, since through sports activities the seeds of peace are sown for the future.

In addition, National Olympic Committees such as that of Jordan and of Greece have presented sports programmes through which they are attempting to support the children of war and millions of refugees. For the first time in Rio, refugees from various countries participated as a team in the Olympics. The Olympic Movement thus declared its solidarity with all refugees from around the world.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIFE					
KALOKAGATHIA					
	Base	Actions	Orientations	Ideas	Virtues
SPORT – EDUCATION – CULTURE	Volunteer Effort Joy in Effort	Performance Demonstration Effort to do one's best	Overcome myself Well being Fair play	Competition (Agon)	Bravery (andreia) Justice (dikaiosyni) Wisdom (sofia) Sense (Sofrosyni) Prudence (fronesis)
	Good example, Role models	Respect Equality Solidarity	Self-perfection Personal uplifting Self-realization Self-knowledge Harmonious development	Athlos Social progress Social conduct Social peace	
	Predisposition, Experience values	Value: Approach, Knowledge, Understand, Perceive, Accept Observing rules	Friendship Brotherhood Hospitality	Olympic Truce (Ekecheiria) Values as a base for communal co-existence	
	Artistic Creation	Artistic Competitions, Performance, demonstration	In moderation, balance, symmetry, harmony, rhythm, inspiration of ideas	Eurhythmy	
	Understanding ideals	Internationalism Respect for the environment Co-existence of different people Democracy	Understanding differences. Human rights, equal participation, regardless race, religion, sex, culture... Comparing values & reality	Peace Olympic Games (the festival of the youth of humanity – A civilization of cultures)	
OLYMPISM					
	Motor Skills				
	Intersocial Skills				
	Moral values				
	Aesthetic Skills				
	Humanistic awareness				

The Olympic Movement also promotes the idea of peace through other symbolic activities. For people the world over, Picasso's dove as a symbol of peace is hugely significant and is now presented every two years at the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games. The Torch Relay symbolises cooperation between people, generations, friends and countries. Finally, the ever-increasing participation of women in the Olympic Games is indicative of the peaceful cooperation of the sexes within the Olympic Movement. In Africa, where there are problems between ethnic groups, football and volleyball have constituted a means of reconciliation between warring parties. During the football World Cup, rival combatants "…put down their guns and picked up their radios", noted Ben Dotsei Malor, Head of the United Nations Public Information Unit, on a mission in Nigeria.

The IOC is continuing its fruitful collaboration with the United Nations, the National Olympic Committees, the IOA and National Olympic Academies, which establish educational programmes for the promotion of dialogue between young people from diverse cultural backgrounds, aiming at developing their skills in the resolution of differences and educating teachers in Olympic Truce issues.

In collaboration with other educational organisations, innovative educational ideas and means are being sought for implementing the Olympic Truce in communities, since sport encourages social harmony (inclusion), reforms and the strengthening of social cohesion. The United Nations are aiming to collaborate with the IOC in breaking down social barriers through Olympic education programmes which address poverty, child mortality, the fight against AIDS, gender equality, environmental sustainability, etc.

Our educational proposal includes the following educational model which is based on the cultivation of human virtues for the creation of a better society:

A. The concept of competition, through which young people express their will to excel by complying with the rules of fair play while developing physical abilities and skills.
B. The concept of social peace and progress as a primary element in the development of young peoples' inter-communal skills. Role models and example are the constant in the learning process, personal improvement and the path to young people's self-fulfillment over the course of their lives.
C. The concept of Truce, through education based on principles and values that aim at social cohesion and the adoption of moral attitudes.
D. The concept of eurythmy through development of aesthetic creativity as an element of intellectual judgement, and the capacity to be aware of and

understand notions, structures, symmetry, harmony, moderation, ideas and ideals.

E. The concept of peace, together with the celebration of youth in a multicultural process for the cultivation of cultures, a comparison of values and the reality and understanding of diversity.

Today, organisations at both a national and international level are increasingly acknowledging the significance of sport in efforts to achieve peace and progress. The fact is of particular significance. Various bodies throughout the world are developing action plans. Such bodies include the International Olympic Truce Centre of the International Olympic Committee, the United Nations, Generations for Peace, Kicking for Peace, Twinned Peace Sports Schools of the Peres Center for Peace in Israel, the Al Quas Organization in Palestine, the Open Fun Football Schools programme and an initiative of the Danish Cross Cultures Project Association, being implemented today in three regions of the Balkans, in the Middle East and in the Caucasus countries. Sport is today a global language. Its rules are easily understood regardless of age, gender, social or cultural background and religious convictions, and this greatly facilitates their work.

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THE PARALYMPIC GAMES: PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

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Often when I am invited by an organisation to do a presentation on a topic of their choosing I find that the title I am given to discuss is phrased as a positive and uncritical statement that appears to have an inherent acceptance as a statement of truth. However, in this era of fake news, where our own governments appear happy to lie to us in order to get us to do what they want I believe it is our duty to critically examine and fact check everything we are told. It may be that the statement turns out to be true, but at least we can then be sure of the facts, particularly if it is something we are expected to act on or respond to. To that end I will change the title of this presentation very slightly by simply adding a question mark on the end. This will then allow me to assess the original statement and come to a more balanced understanding of the actual situation.

I will begin by looking at the possible links between the Paralympic Games, the Paralympic Movement and human rights. The Paralympic Games are a multi-sport disability event for elite athletes with physical, intellectual and sensorial disabilities and are now the second largest multi-sport event on the planet after the Olympic Games. Hopefully one of the things you have learnt in your time here in Olympia, if you were not already aware of it, is that the Olympic Movement is much broader than just the Olympic Games in that it is underpinned by Olympism and a goal of making the world a more tolerant and understanding place through sport. In much the same way the Paralympic Movement has aims far beyond the Paralympic

Games with the International Paralympic Committee stating that the Paralympic Movement's ultimate aspiration is "to make for a more inclusive society for people with an impairment through para-sport" (IPC, 2015; p. 14).

Before outlining why such a claim might be necessary I will begin by first outlining what human rights and human rights legislation are. According to the United Nations (n.d.)

> *Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.* (UN, n.d.)

The United Nations goes on to state that international human rights law lays down the obligations of governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups. However, as a sociologist I would define human rights legislation or policy a little differently. For me it is a legal mechanism, which if properly enacted and enforced can act to lessen power differentials between dominant and marginalised groups that the dominant group seeks to capitalise upon for their own gain at the expense of others. As such the maintenance of these power differentials is an exercise in power, which in sociological terms is called "social closure", whereby boundaries are established and sustained by the group that dominates a particular field in an effort to keep out potential newcomers (Patillo, 2008). In addition to preventing outsiders from entering a field and reaping its rewards, this has the added effect of producing what is known as "opportunity hoarding" by members of the dominant group within a field (McKnight, 2015). According to Brar (2016), "opportunity hoarding is a deliberate process by which social closure enables the dominant group to disproportionately amass the available rewards in a particular field, thereby strengthening and entrenching their dominant position within that field" (p. 66). A clear example of this would be apartheid in South Africa, which used a mixture of force and ideology in order to allow white South Africans to live far more prosperous and freer lives, whilst excluding the black and coloured population from these benefits.

One of the ways these power differentials are maintained within society, beyond mere force or economics, is through the concept of ableism, which is

underpinned by social construction theory, and can be applied to class, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and all of their relevant "isms" as a way to explain how power is exercised in each of these contexts (Kearney et al., 2019). For the purpose of this presentation I will focus solely on its application within the context of disability.

Ableism

In the context of people with disabilities

> *"ableism describes prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviours toward persons with a disability. Definitions of ableism hinge on one's understanding of normal ability and the rights and benefits afforded to persons deemed 'normal'"* (Wolbring, 2012; 78).

Ableism is, therefore, closely associated with the notion of norms and normalcy and the resultant power relationships derived from the imposition of normative values as a mechanism for maintaining the power of one group over another, with those who best fit these construed norms upholding power over those who diverge from them. Kearney et al (2019) claim that:

> *While normalcy is existent in the background and is unobtrusive in everyday life for people meeting the established criteria of "normal", for those perceived to deviate from the "norm" it often exists in the foreground of their realities and is more prevalent in their perceptions of lived experiences within the social order.* (p.7)

Thomas Hehir (2002) of the Harvard Graduate School of Education further defines ableism as

> *the devaluation of disability ... that results in societal attitudes that uncritically assert that it is better for a child to walk than roll, speak than sign, read print than read Braille, spell independently than use a spell-check, and hang out with non-disabled kids as opposed to other disabled kids.* (p. 2)

Ableism, therefore, devalues people with disabilities and results in segregation, social isolation, and social policies that limit opportunities for full societal participation. The two primary mechanisms through which this occurs are through the ableist

attitudes that nearly all people within society are socialised (to varying degrees) into and an inaccessible environment bought about due to the fact that it is generally designed and built with only those who most closely embody normative values in mind. These result in the exclusion of people with disabilities from accessing opportunities for work, education and other forms of social capital, which in turn leads to the social isolation and exclusion highlighted above.

Different forms of 'violence' used against people with disabilities

Using an adaptation of Galtung's Triangle of Violence, below, I will now highlight some of the ways in which people with disabilities have historically been "victims" of various kinds of "violence" or discrimination around the world (See figure 1). For the purposes of this presentation violence is defined by the World Health Organisation as:

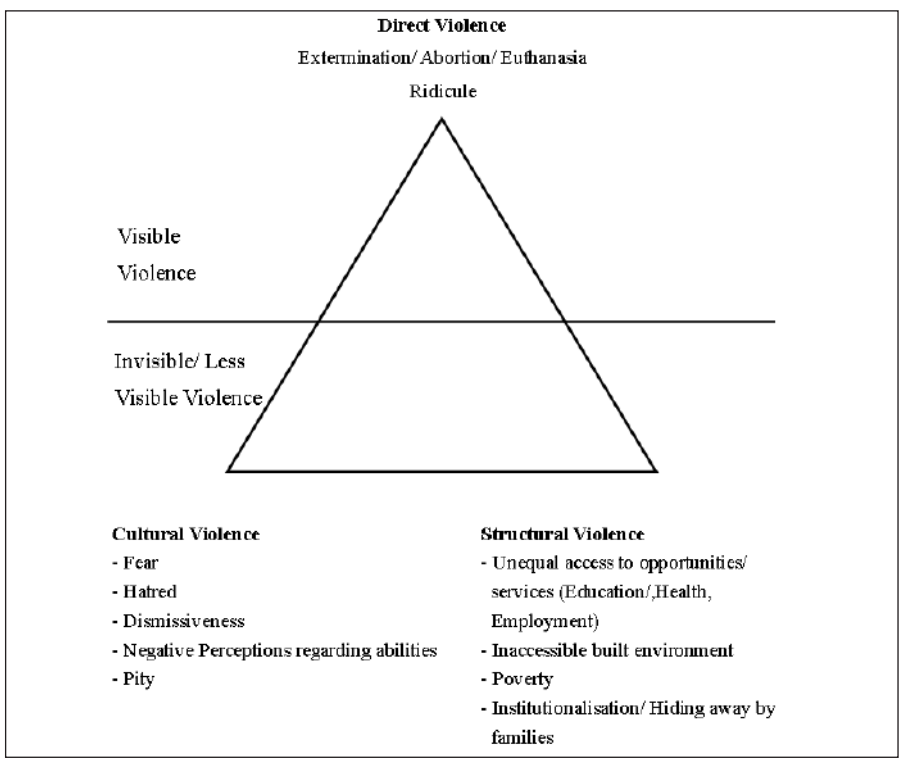

Figure 1. Disability and the triangle of violence (adapted from Johan Galtung, 1990).

> *"the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation".* (World Health Organisation website, 2010)

I will now give a brief overview of each of these three forms of "violence" (Direct, Structural and Cultural) in relation to people with disabilities.

Direct Violence

In terms of direct violence, extermination of people with disabilities has occurred throughout history from ancient times for a variety of reasons including some religious beliefs that held that people with disabilities were evil, to modern genetic engineers who put a modern spin on the need to exterminate anything that might interfere with ideal or 'normal' development of the human body, for example Nazi Germany.

Although the more extreme forms of visible direct violence such as extermination may not be anywhere near as prevalent today (although this is not say that it does not still happen in more isolated areas or individual cases) other forms of visible violence such as abortion and even euthanasia still occur, often legally within society, even though both practices come under heavy criticism from a number of different sources.

Structural Violence

In terms of structural violence, in addition to the usually reported issues of poverty and an inaccessible built environment, there are a number of other issues that come under the heading of structural violence. Up to the early 1900s, it was very common to institutionalise any individual who somehow deviated significantly from the norm. Although this was viewed as the humane thing to do, many acknowledge that institutions were created to protect the non-disabled from those with disabilities.

The hiding away by families of family members who are disabled can occur as a result of a variety of cultural and/ or religious reasons. The central precept of

Dr Ian Brittain, Assistant Professor at the Coventry University, focused his lecture on the Paralympic Games in relation to the human rights' promotion.

Buddhism revolves around "Karma" whereby actions in this life dictate the level of existence in the next. At a conceptual level, this often means that disability is seen as a punishment for bad actions committed in previous lives. Persons with a disability, especially in rural areas are, therefore, often hidden by their families who are afraid for their reputations in the wider community – specifically the very Asian idea of "losing face".

Unequal access to services can result from many different situations and are another example of social closure and opportunity hoarding by the dominant group with society (the non-disabled) whereby they maintain the resources and the benefits that come with them in a particular field for themselves at the exclusion of others.

Cultural Violence

Cultural violence can include emotional responses to disability such as fear, hatred, dismissiveness or pity that can have major impacts upon the way people

within non-disabled society interact with people with disabilities. Even the reaction of close friends to a sudden acquired disability can cause problems in a previously close friendship as Danny (in Brittain, 2002; p. 138) pointed out following the loss of his right arm at the shoulder during a car accident:

> *"a lot of them found it very difficult, obviously, to come to terms with it. More so than me. And they found it hard to be around me, friends that I'd had for years"* (Danny).

The fact that many of Danny's long-term friends found it hard to be around him following his accident appears to be in line with Hogan's (1999) contention that an acquired disability signifies a massive change in social status in the eyes of those around them. It is likely that a general lack of understanding of disability and the issues surrounding it were to blame for the difficulty of Danny's friends in accepting his disability, for as Chris (in Brittain, 2002; p. 138) so concisely put it:

> *"They have very little knowledge of people with a disability and instead the attitude is basically if I leave it alone and don't touch them and don't get involved then it's not my problem kind of thing"* (Chris).

The reaction of Danny's friends to his acquired impairment clearly demonstrates the effect that a lack of understanding and a fear of the difference of anyone who does not conform to societal norms of able-bodiedness can have. Danny is still fully ambulatory with all his visual and intellectual faculties intact. He simply has one arm less than the majority of people.

What is development and who defines it?

Having now highlighted how disability is a human rights issue, I would like to turn my attention to the issue of "development". What is development and who defines it? On a simplistic level development is defined by the Cambridge English dictionary as "the process in which someone or something grows or changes and becomes more advanced", but what do we mean by 'more advanced' and who decides what is advanced and what is not? In a social context development is a highly politically charged term, which is often complex, contested, ambiguous,

and elusive that is used to justify a variety of different agendas held by different people or organisations (SOAS, n.d.). In the end the definition of the term development and whose definition gets applied to a given situation is often a matter of power relationships, with the group holding power most often being the group that gets to define the terms used. In modern day politics this is often referred to as cultural imperialism whereby a group with power exercises their domination in cultural relationships in order to impose their values, practices, and meanings upon one, or more, less powerful cultures (Tomlinson, 2012). The most often cited cases of this are the global north using their economic power to impose their values upon the global south.

Implications for the Paralympic Movement and people with disabilities

So what does this mean in terms of disability and the Paralympic Games? Well, for me there are two key impositions of power and dominance at play here. Firstly, there is the imposition of the dominant non-disabled narrative of disability (ableism) outlined above that keep people with disabilities isolated and excluded from the rest of society through ableism and social closure. Secondly, it should be noted that, like the Olympic Games, the Paralympic Games were started by, and are largely dominated by, countries in Western Europe and North America and to a certain degree the Paralympic Games are being used as a form of cultural imperialism with which to continue to impose their values on the rest of the world. However, as a side note it should also be highlighted that China has also invested particularly heavily in this area as they have risen to become a worldwide economic powerhouse.

So do Paralympic Games really promote Human Rights and development?

This really is a difficult and complex question to answer. As with the difficulties in defining development there are also real difficulties in defining whether that development has actually occurred. As an example, I would like you to consider two differing perspectives on whether the London 2012 Paralympic Games had an impact upon the way people with disabilities are treated in the UK. The first is from a UK government and the second is from Scope, a charity that represents people with disability in the UK. Roughly a year after

the London 2012 Games the UK government produced a report that cited the following headline achievements under the chapter entitled 'The Legacy of the Paralympics':

- 81% of people surveyed thought that the Games had a positive effect on how disabled people are viewed by the British public
- Disabled people's participation in sport is increasing
- Increased funding for Paralympics GB through to Rio 2016
- Increased funding to support access and participation in sport at community level
- Increased accessibility on the transport system, in venues and in other environments
- Paralympic Legacy Advisory Group established to support the Cabinet Committee

(UK Government/Mayor of London, 2013)

However, in contrast to the positive pronouncements by the UK Government the report by Scope published at around the same time reported the following findings after interviewing around one thousand disabled people:

- 81% of disabled people said that attitudes towards them hadn't improved in the last 12 months
- 22% said that things had actually got worse
- One in five (17%) of disabled people report they have either experienced hostile or threatening behaviour or even been attacked
- One in five (16%) disabled people say they cannot keep up with rising costs of living
- Disabled people are three times more likely to take out high interest, high risk loans to pay the bills
- ONS data showed that nearly half of disabled people have had issues accessing leisure activities
- A 2012 polling for Scope showed that three-quarters of disabled people had experienced people refusing to make adjustments or do things differently

(Scope, 2013)

These two perspectives appear to be almost polar opposites. In order to ascertain why, one needs to look at what is at stake for the two organisations. The UK government, having invested billions of pounds of UK taxpayers money

into hosting the Games clearly feel a need to justify that expenditure through promoting all the perceived positive benefits to come out of the Games for fear that if the results were negative they might lose support and, therefore, their dominant position as the ruling political party. Scope on the other hand have the role of promoting the human rights of people with disabilities and, therefore, are not at risk of losing any kind of power in presenting their results, although it is true that they could be overplaying their results in order to make a stronger case for change.

The other thing that is interesting about the UK government findings is that the majority of their published findings are in relation to sport rather than any positive changes in the lives of the overall population of people with disabilities. Whilst it is true that some Paralympians have become celebrities as a result of the media coverage they received from London 2012 (combined, of course, with their sporting successes), the apparent inability of some people to differentiate between Paralympians and the average everyday person with a disability, possibly driven by media coverage of the Games themselves and government rhetoric around them, is seen as having caused more problems than it has solved. The following quote from Bush et al (2013) is indicative of this:

> *He'd already sensed the disappointment lurking behind people's eyes when he told them he was not training for a future Paralympics. People would now expect this, yet he was more worried about the day-to-day struggles of being disabled.*
>
> (Bush et al., 2013, p. 635)

Research carried out by the Australian Paralympic Committee (APC) interviewing spectators at disability sports events in Australia appear to confirm this as according to Tony Naar, the former Knowledge Services Manager at APC, the results appear to show that it is only spectators attitudes towards the actual athletes and not the disabled population as a whole that are changed (Naar, personal communication; 21 February 2014).

Other claims you may often hear made about the impact of the Paralympic Games are around the introduction of national disability legislation by hosting countries, such as that introduced by Russia in the lead up to the Sochi 2014 winter Games or claims of improved accessibility to local transport networks such as those being made regarding Tokyo 2020. However, I would argue that legislation is only as useful as its enforcement. If there is no real power behind it,

it will simply be ignored or seen as an inconvenience, particularly if it is perceived to negatively impact on profits by organisations affected by it. Also, if increased accessibility to transport networks are not matched by improved accessibility to buildings, information etc. or the people involved in implementing accessibility services such as those who place ramps onto trains at the correct time and place for a person with a disability to access don't comply with those requirements, then being able to get to the train platform or to get to the shop front they wish to access is somewhat pointless if they cannot get on or in.

Conclusion

I guess what I have tried to highlight in the short space available to me is the complexity of the issues and power struggles at play. My own personal opinion is that the Paralympic Games, much like its Olympic counterpart in terms of Olympism, fails to live up to the grandiose claims that it makes, but this doesn't necessarily mean that they should give up trying to achieve them. With respect to the Paralympic Games it would appear currently that it is only athletes with disabilities that are benefiting positively from any change in attitudes by the non-disabled population, whilst the rest of the population with disabilities are potentially being side-lined even further for their perceived failure to align themselves with non-disabled norms of physical ability. However, and this is very important – I do fervently believe in the power of the Paralympic Games, not to actually change attitudes, but as the world's most visible and high-profile platform from which to start a much-needed debate about disability issues worldwide. The media coverage it receives is such that it provides the greatest possible medium through which to start a much-needed discussion about these issues. After all, the first step towards change is awareness!

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SPORTS DIPLOMACY: PANACEA FOR WHAT AILS ASIA

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Diplomacy is the means by which States throughout the world conduct their affairs in ways to ensure peaceful relations. The main task of individual diplomatic services is to safeguard the interests of their respective countries abroad. This concerns as much the promotion of political, economic, cultural or scientific relations as it does international commitment to defend human rights or the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Sports diplomacy falls under public diplomacy, which is used to improve intermediate and long-term relations between states by influencing the public abroad to accomplish foreign policy goals (Gilboa, 2008). The interplay between sport, international relations and diplomacy is a long, complex and fascinating one. Like cultural ethos music or art, sport is a universal language that can transcend acrimonious diplomatic relationships, offer high profile pathways for dialogue beyond the negotiating table and, idealistically, unite disparate nations and their public through a mutual affection for sports competition and games.

The domains of sport and diplomacy have had a long, often fraught, and generally under-appreciated relationship, at least since the emergence of the modern Olympic Movement in the late 19th century. Given the unparalleled visibility, popularity, and mobilising potential of modern sport, accompanied by intense manifestations of identity (national, regional, local, sectarian, ethnic, etc.). It is hardly surprising that sports teams, events, and venues have been viewed as compelling vehicles for the political and diplomatic ambitions of

both governments and the range of people engaged in network diplomacy. Yet particularly in the various societies a full engagement with the politico-diplomatic possibilities of sport was long inhibited by what Lincoln Allison has termed *"the myth of autonomy"*. This is the idea that sport was somehow separate from society, that it transcended or had "nothing to do with" politics and social conflict. Underpinned by the paradoxical convictions that it was both: "above" or "below" the political dimensions of social life. This myth has proven highly durable, despite much contradictory evidence. The result was that for many governments, there was a deep reluctance to explicitly engage the "world of sport" as a focus of diplomatic analysis and practice.

Authoritarian regimes of all stripes-fascist, communist, military, etc. have on the whole been considerably less reticent about embracing sport as a tool of international diplomacy. However would-be "users" have encountered other challenges the limited and erratic interchange-ability of sport as a diplomatic currency. In short investments in sport do not reliably generate the anticipated benefits and in some cases it can positively recoil on their users in unanticipated ways. A particularly striking example is the 1988 Seoul Olympics, which rebounded on the country's authoritarian military rulers in ways that decisively, advanced the process of liberal democratization. In this respect, there is some real substance to the idea that sport and the organisations that govern it, has a relatively high degree of autonomy that makes it difficult to control and manipulate with durable political effects.

While sports may temporarily transcend divisions in society, events like Olympics rarely serve to advance countries diplomatic aims. The 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea could create a positive vibe on the Korean peninsula, but the event was unlikely to yield lasting diplomatic gains, says Jonathan Grix, professor of sports policy at Manchester Metropolitan University. While the impact of sports on diplomacy may be limited, events like the Olympics continue to attract countries for their value in public diplomacy. There have clearly been instances where participating countries boosted their reputations, he says. Sometimes, however, the effect is ephemeral, or nationalism becomes a vehicle for "interstate rivalry played out on the sporting pitch", Grix said in an interview by Eleanor Albert in February 2018.

As Mahatma Gandhi M.K. said and reiterated by Nelson Mandela (2000), sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. Sport can awaken hope

where there was previously only despair. Sport speaks to people in a language they can understand.

Through a review of different foreign policy objectives that are common in multilateral diplomacy, we discuss the effectiveness of sports as a platform for diplomacy. The most common strategic objectives are

1. Providing an unofficial reason and location for international leaders to meet and begin a dialogue
2. Providing insights into the host country and educating others about it
3. Bridging cultural and linguistic differences among nations and seeking common ground through sports
4. Creating a platform for new trade agreements or legislation
5. Creating awareness for the international relationship through sport ambassadors
6. Creating a legacy for the host country, improving its image in the world
7. Using sport to provide legitimacy for a new nation

The politico-diplomatic nature of international sport is, in part, the result of the formative role of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Olympic Movement it spearheads, and its social mission –Olympism– in world politics. Though international and transnational sporting engagements were not uncommon prior to the IOC's founding in 1894, Pierre de Coubertin (the reviver of the Olympic Games in the modern era) imbued this resolutely non-governmental organisation with the overtly diplomatic aim of promoting a prominent sort of cultural "internationalism" or *"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", which means "the world is one family".*

Over time, a plethora of diverse actors have come to occupy the diplomatic space of international sports. As with the broader trend towards non-governmental influence in diplomatic networks, the world of international sport has seen the rise of many NGOs that pursue issue-specific or country-specific mandates. A vibrant and much-discussed community of actors who apply sporting practices to the task of 'international development' has arisen in recent decades; a perusal of the database of organisations maintained by the International Platform on Sport and Development reveals NGOs addressing everything from HIV/AIDS to post-conflict peace-building and reconciliation. Many of these NGOs are financed or sponsored by governments, national sporting bodies or leagues (e.g. National Sports Organisations), or private firms (e.g. major sports wear MNCs), thus further complicating the layers of

diplomacy and the interests in play. For example, Right to Play - perhaps the most prominent "sport for development" NGO – receives significant funding from (inter)governmental agencies (e.g. the United Nations Children's Fund), multinationals, other NGOs (e.g. Save the Children) and sports organisations (e.g. the ISOs , NSOs, SAI etc.). The question of diplomatic space becomes dramatically complicated by the fact that *"Right to Play"* is, at once, perceived to represent human values as well as the interests of the stakeholders. Within this growing panoply of players, the leading ISOs have adapted and indeed thrived, notwithstanding periodic scandal. They, in turn, have elicited new interest and roles on the part of other non-governmental as well as government actors. Though the IOC was not the first ISO to commercialise its product or to allow professionals into its historically amateur ranks, these decisions had monumental effects upon the entire universe of ISOs. When Juan Antonio Samaranch – a controversial former Palange politician in Franco's Spain and later Spanish ambassador to the USSR - became the IOC president in 1980, the organisation was nearly bankrupt. His decision to invite commercial sponsors to bid for the right to associate themselves with the Olympic Movement and to raise the stakes significantly for aspiring television broadcasters made the IOC one of the richest NGOs on the planet. It also incorporated MNCs and their interests firmly within the international sporting scene. Many other ISOs and NOCs followed the IOC's example (though few as profitably), and even those who retained amateur features or attracted little commercial interest have benefitted financially because of the distribution of IOC resources throughout the Olympic system. As a consequence, MNCs have become integral to the Olympic Movement, notably through exclusive and lucrative sponsorship arrangements that give these privileged corporate "partners" a major stake in the preservation and propagation of the internationalist image and ideology of Olympism. They have also often influenced or made demands upon Olympic actors, as manifested in the National Broadcasting Corporation's insistence that certain high-profile events be scheduled for primetime viewing in the United States or critics' suspicions that host city selections are at least partially determined by the presence of attractive markets for Olympic sponsors. Corporate sponsors, in turn, have enabled the IOC to attain unprecedented reach and power from its already privileged position. In many ways then, as noted a moment ago, the IOC's decision to market its "brand" has transformed it into a virtual MNC in its own right. The CSR and Sports through market in events like Olympic Games,

Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and World Championships target to clinch the social ails.

In traditional international diplomacy and the current trend of sports diplomacy is recognised as one of the most effective way of the expanding scope of the practice, the increasing specialisation necessary, and the new formats for engagement all make a more networked approach the only feasible way forward.

Diplomacy is an asset to every nation, developed or developing. It also acts as a soft knife to get work done in conditions of tensions, and cold wars between countries. Different tools of diplomacy are used for different occasions by different countries in their respective manners. Tools such as round table conferences, meetings of senior officials, positive statements, offering help, showing empathy on the event of a tragedy etc. are used by the countries. Nowadays, sports diplomacy is a major tool used by all the countries to make cordial relations with their colleagues. This can be understood by the example of India where sports are an important tool of diplomacy for example cricket match with the neighborhood countries. Indo-Pak relations always have the cricket and music as a chain reaction to melt the ice during cold war. In the

current scenario both countries are not even ready for unconditional dialogue playing sports at an international arena like Olympic qualifiers etc is breaking the ice at some point. So as is with other country's example.

The countries target the nations to improve the relation. The cultural exchange programme or the sport dignitaries' delegation directly affects the relationship between the two. This diplomacy technique is very economic i.e. low costing and yield higher results. The place where all conversations are stopped and no needs of communication are open between two countries, sports acts as a mediator. Whether to have the matches between the countries on invitation or to be the part of any international events like Olympics, World Cup etc. which can be bypassed or overlooked and the delegation in charge express his / her views about the country to start up the channel of talk. This sports diplomacy can help in managing the various issues.

Society is a small niche which we create or are forced to create around ourselves for a harmonious and peaceful life. However, it is the very same society, which marks the downfall of human kind and does not resonate with its true functioning. Which cause ails like Environment (Pollution, Desertification, Deforestation, Overconsumption), Climate Change (Global Warming), Ocean (Marine Pollution and Ocean Governance), Poverty, Food Insecurity (Malnutrition, Food Safety and Food Riots, Hunger), Water (Scarcity, Water Conflict, Water Privatization), Health Issues, Children (Child Poverty, Child Labor, Child Abuse, Child Morality), Education, Humanitarian Crises (Migration, Refugees, Displacement), Population (Over Population, Ageing Population), Human Rights Violations, Human Settlement (Slums, Urbanization, Sanitation), Development (Social and Economic), Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Labor Exploitation, Peace, Conflict and Security, Governance (Lack of Equity, Participation, Populism, Transparency, Accountable, Corruption and Rule of Law), Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Religious and Ethnic Tolerance, Rising Income Inequality, Disaster Management, Social Issues (Racism on the basis of caste colour etc., Communalism, Regionalism, Language Conflicts, Sectarian, Discrimination and Injustice), Terrorism (including Cyber-terrorism), Waste Management (including Nuclear Waste), Gender Issues (Gender Inequality, Women Rights, Offences Against Women, Discrimination, Rape etc.), Artificial Intelligence Arms Race and also cause future threat of Bio Terrorism (Intentional Release of Biological Agents Like Bacteria, Virus, Fungi or Toxins) and so on and so forth.

Over the years, rather centuries, people have always kept society on the highest pedestal and it is this very same entity which has often turned its back, discriminated, and reduced people to mere objects, instead of supporting them; such a plight can be seen when we talk about women.

Quoting Simone De Beauvoir, women have been treated as "the second sex", wherein, they are often restricted to mere sexual objects, domestic help and a procreation machine. Since time immemorial, they have been put into cages, restricted and their existence has been that of a dependent person.

A woman is often associated with the man of the family and her identity and role is influenced by the relation she has with the man; viz. a daughter, a sister, a wife, and a mother.

It is true that the times are changing and this gender biasness and disparity is ending, but we must acknowledge the fact that this change is slow and subjective or just looks like but not actually.

An urban setting may witness or accept the concept of a "modern, working woman", but the same acceptance can be a little difficult in a rural setting, especially in the case of Asia which is primarily constituted by its rural heritage.

We cannot help but wonder the various factors and reasons as to why such discrimination exists in our social environment, what ails Asia. It works as a termite to the growth of the entire Asian continent. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the root of social ails is discrimination and inequality. If we truly consider one species as human first with no discrimination and with equality in all spheres that moment will be an inception or seeding of society without ails.

Sports diplomacy works beyond discrimination one species human and earth as a family under the umbrella of the Olympic Games. Arch-rival countries and people become competitors to channelise their contention into competition. Deprived and maltreated gets recognition with dignity. Asia has its own rich moral traditional heritage of *"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"*.

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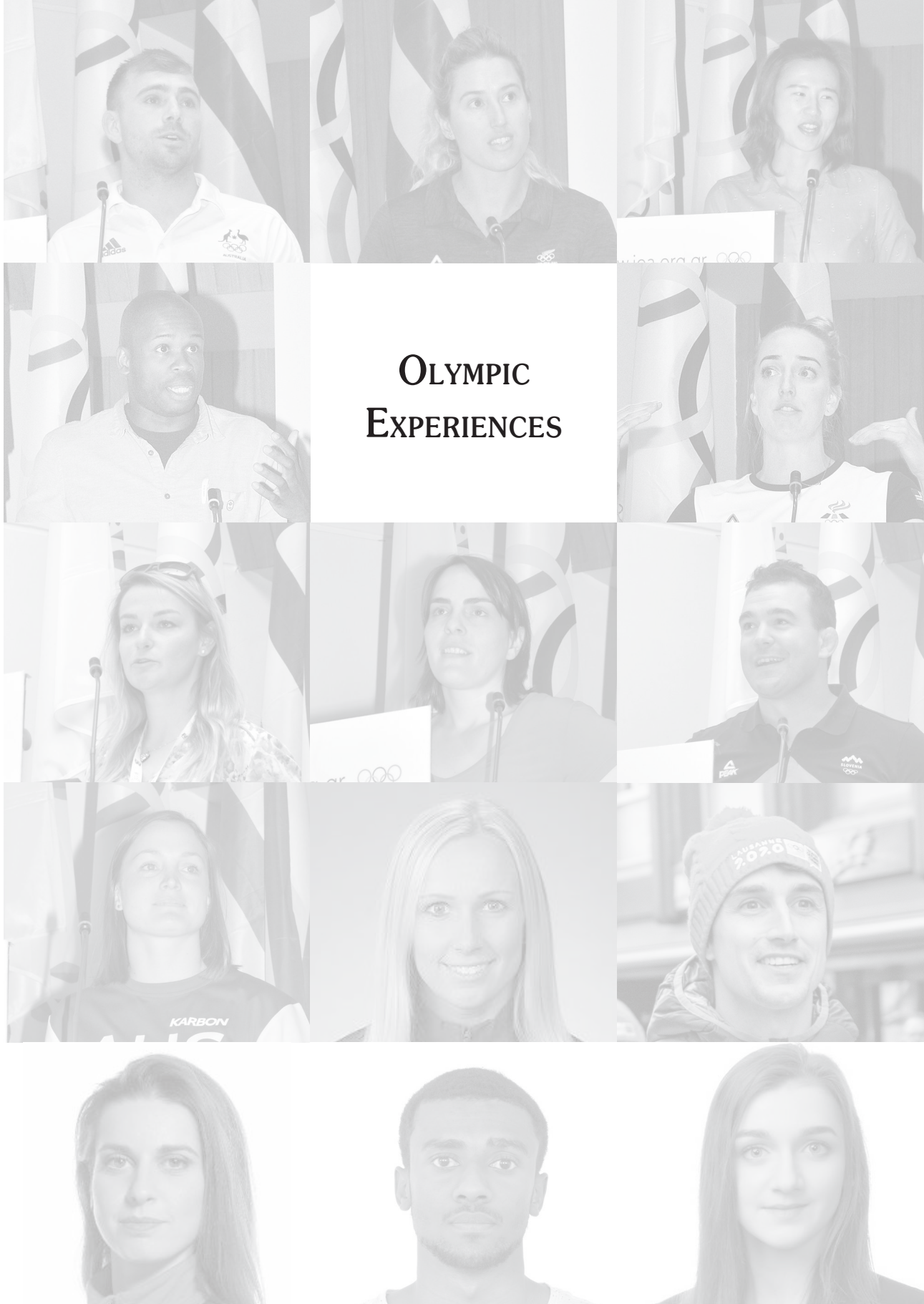
All human beings want to improve upon themselves through their hard work and determination. One of the hurdles that may arise in achieving this is the conflict between the brain and the heart. If the heart is convinced, then that becomes your strongest tool while if it is not convinced then it becomes your biggest liability. It is up to us we want the evil to overcome the angel or the angel to overcome the evil in us. Sports help to manoeuvre the evil thought into an angel by exploding into physical workout and competitions. So as sports diplomacy works as a panacea what ails the mother earth to achieve *"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam".*

Posing questions to the lecturers.



Olympic Experiences

MY OLYMPIC STORY

Grant NEL (AUS)

I was born in South Africa, both my father and mother were good athletes, with my mother representing South Africa I Gymnastic at the world championship level. For as long as I can remember I was climbing trees and swinging off things and was put into gymnastics from when I was four years old. Gym was a great sport for me and I excelled in it making the junior south African team. Unfortunately, I had a really bad accident at training one day when I was nine when a high bar fell across my hands, crushing both of them, so I had to take a long time off the sport.

At the same time my school (St Stithians) had just finished building a diving pool and we had physical education classes learning how to dive during school. I picked this up really easily and was asked by the national coach to start the sport with my hands still being a problem for gym so I quit gym and started diving winning south African junior nationals my first year in the sport.

The following year my family and I immigrated to Australia where I continued to dive and do well. I became an Australian citizen in 2002 and was selected for my first Australian national team in 2003.

Over the years I have been lucky enough to compete all over the world not without many highs and lows. Training consisted of eleven sessions a week; every morning and evening Monday to Friday and Saturday morning. I would have to average more than 100 dives a session. We spent a lot of time in the gym building strength and core stability as well as on dry land working on diving boards to crash mats or into foam pits perfecting our technique.

I have been fortunate to compete at five world championships, five world Cups

and countless Grand Prix's. My best world ranking was top eight in the world in 2014. I medalled at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi in 2010 (Bronze), and at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow (Silver and Bronze).

In 2009 I started a student athlete full scholarship at Texas A&M University, College Station. During my time at Texas A&M under coach Jay Lerew, I received four letterman awards; I was a nine time all American including five top three finishes at NCAA's. I won three individual Big 12 titles and broke six A&M pool records.

Diving has made me the person who I am today and there is no better feeling than the feeling I had on the 15th of August 2016 at 10.43am when I crossed the pool at the Maria Lenk Aquatics Centre in Rio looking up at the crowd and in particular my family. I did my first dive and became an Olympian. It brings tears to my eyes every time I think of it.

It has been such a big achievement and honour to represent Australia at the Olympics especially when back in October 2015 I was in bed with a back injury for six weeks. At the time I couldn't feel my right leg, my L5 S1 lumbar sacral joint (lower back) had shifted a few millimeters and was touching on the sciatic nerve so because of that I lost all the feeling and a lot of muscle mass in my right leg. And I had to learn how to walk again.

When I think back about that time, making the semi-final and coming 15th in the world at the Olympic Games is a pretty good achievement. I am very lucky and grateful to be an Olympian and I have had such wonderful supportive family and friends, particularly from my coach Michel Larouche; without him I would not have come close to achieving my goal of making the Olympics, I owe everything to him.

In my presentation I spoke about my favorite quote:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone and as we let our own light shine we unconsciously give people permission to do the same and we are liberated from our own fear. Our presence automatically liberates others (Marianne Williamson).

Success is not something to be afraid of. We work hard for our dreams; don't sell yourself short because you might actually become great.

MY OLYMPIC JOURNEY

Melissa INGRAM (NZL)

It is an honour to share my Olympic journey with you today. I represented New Zealand in the sport of swimming at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and 2012 London Olympics. I started swimming at three months of age. My mum took me along to lessons every week because New Zealand is surrounded by water so it is really important that we know how to swim if we fall in the water.

I started competing when I was seven years old but was never the child that won lots of medals. It wasn't until I was 13 years old that I won my first national age group gold medal in the 200m backstroke and was then selected as a member of the New Zealand age group team to compete at a competition in Australia.

I got faster and faster over the next few years and qualified for the 2002 Commonwealth Games at 16 years old, which is fairly young in swimming. I made a final in the 200m backstroke and looked forward to qualifying for the 2004 Athens Olympics a couple of years later but it was not to be. I missed the qualifying time by .2 of a second and was devastated. Four more years until the Beijing Olympics felt like it was forever away and I seriously considered giving up. But my Olympic dream had been strong for over a decade by this stage so I got back in the pool within weeks and started training hard again.

My typical training schedule as an elite swimmer was ten pool sessions of two hours each a week, as well as five additional sessions of weights, running, pilates, and core strength. I spent about 30-40 hours a week training and juggled this with university study, part-time work, sponsorship commitments and travel.

When the trials for the 2008 Beijing Olympics rolled around I was very nervous. Having been so close to qualifying four years ago, I would be lying if I said there wasn't a voice in the back of my head telling me I could miss again. My training had been going well and I had worked with a sports psychologist for techniques on how to remain calm under pressure and deliver my best performance.

I ended up qualifying for both the 100m and 200m backstroke, the latter in a national open record time, finally becoming the fastest Kiwi woman ever in that event. I still hold the record, 11 years on, but I am looking forward to the day that someone breaks it.

The Beijing Olympics are one of the top highlights of my life. I think the Olympics meant more to me after missing Athens by such a small margin. And to finally explore Athens the other day, 15 years after missing the Olympic team, was surreal.

Olympic athletes told me before I left for Beijing that the Olympics was a very scary and intimidating competition where they felt out of their depths and intimidated. I went into the Olympic village with this idea in mind but I can't say I felt the same. Whether it was because I had competed at a number of large international events already, or I had a few more years experience behind me at 23 years old, I am not sure. But I loved competing at the Olympics and felt that I had worked extremely hard and deserved to be there.

After arriving at the Beijing airport, having flown in from our staging camp in Japan, we were driven by bus to the Olympic village late at night. It was about 9 pm when we arrived and the village was quiet. It was only the next day that I saw it in all its glory. Country flags strewn across apartment towers where national teams were staying. Countries like the USA and China had multiple towers, little New Zealand had one. It was a home away from home as our New Zealand team did an amazing job creating a space to make us feel calm and at ease. Kiwi coffee, Kiwi sweets and all of our favourite Kiwi things, as well as our Kiwi team-mates and support staff.

My favourite place in the Olympic village was the dining hall. I had heard all about it, but experiencing it for myself was next level. The free McDonald's after I finished competing was the best and I ate so much of it that it felt odd to pay for McDonald's when I returned home. I had been very strict with my eating up until competition time so it was fun to let loose. There is something magic about 10,000 athletes from all around the world joining in one spot of the world

to eat together. I remember seeing Usain Bolt being mauled by people for an autograph in the food hall at the London Olympics. His security people had to turn fans away. So there are even stars in an Olympic village!

I loved every minute of my Olympic experience. I swam a personal best time in the 200 m backstroke and finished 11th, which I was a bit disappointed with, but I had broken my own national open record, swam faster than ever before and was 11th in the world. I wanted an Olympic medal, I had trained to win an Olympic medal, but I wasn't fast enough on the day. I remember looking up into the stands before my race and the people at the back looked like tiny ants. The atmosphere in the Beijing water cube was electric with all of the flashing lights.

I will always feel lucky that the swimming is in the first half of the Olympic programme because it meant I got to watch other sports events and explore the host country without having to worry about preparing for my event. In Beijing I was lucky enough to travel around to various venues with my fellow Kiwi teammates to witness what the New Zealand media would dub "Super Saturday". A day in which we won five medals in the space of four hours –two golds, one silver and two bronze– an amazing feat for a small nation.

I did not have time to sleep as I went to every sport I could get tickets to, I ventured out as a tourist to see the amazing sights like the Great Wall of China and I shopped until I dropped at the markets. It took me 13 years to achieve my dream with plenty of heartache along the way but gosh it was worth it for every second of my Beijing Olympic experience.

I also competed at the 2012 London Olympic Games. A very different experience from Beijing as my build up had been somewhat hindered with issues in New Zealand swimming. The sport was under review and there was conflict between coaching staff. I did my very best to put this to the side and focus on my performance but things like this have a way of creeping in. I am not making excuses for my performance –which was 11th again– but rather wanting to share insights into the challenges facing athletes and the importance of our mindset when competing.

I decided to retire after the London Olympics because I did not believe that I would swim faster at the Rio Olympics at the age of 31, than I did in London. I felt like I had given the sport everything I had, and although sad and frightening to retire from elite sport, I actually found the transition fairly simple as I had big

life goals, a career path in mind, a university degree behind me and ultimately I knew I had given everything to the sport. I had totally dedicated my life to it.

My mum reminded me a few weeks ago of the time she took me to a 5am swimming session when I was ten years old and I was sick in the carpark when the car stopped. She told me she was taking me home, to which I replied, "No you're not", and got out of the car and went and completed the two hour training session. I was not the most talented athlete by any means but I trained really hard and never gave up. Life lessons that have held me in good stead after swimming as I now juggle a full-time job, my Olympic ambassador role, being a mum and wife, and finding time to keep fit and active.

I was worried that when I retired from swimming I would face depression like so many of my retired friends but thankfully I did not experience this and I think this is in part due to my being selected as a New Zealand Olympic Ambassador in 2013 which sees me travel to schools around New Zealand, sharing my Olympic journey with the intention to inspire the next generation. I feel so lucky to still be doing this six years later, sharing my commitment to Olympism and educating and encouraging the younger generation about it.

I have been so inspired by the session so far and I am so grateful for this amazing opportunity. Thank you for listening to my story.

MY OLYMPIC STORY

Lijia XU (Lily) (CHN)

I was born in 1987 in Shanghai, the largest city in China. I am partially deaf, with about half the hearing of an ordinary person – this was inherited from my father who had about two thirds of his hearing. My left eye can barely make out anything due to poor sight, called amblyopia, which was passed on from my mother.

I was like a tomboy in my early years: short haircut, loud voice, playing with boys, hyperactive, loving adventures and trying new things, doing everything fast, and so on. Because of this non-girly character, my parents decided to let me try some sports in the hope that I would be quieter after some intensive training.

On seeing a poster for a district swimming team outside my pre-school front gate, they sent me to see a swimming coach, which was followed by some test exercises. Luckily I was accepted by the Changning District Swimming Team of Shanghai. So my sports career started at the age of five. This was pretty much my life for the next five years: my whole time was devoted to study and swimming.

From childhood, I was a hard worker and I would do fitness training by myself during the school holidays. There was a popular Japanese TV series at the time called "The Flame of Youth". It told the story of a female volleyball player and her campaign for the Olympics. I found it very inspiring as she conquered numerous setbacks and difficulties, and she trained extremely hard all the time. I even learnt some exercises from her, like frog jumps, handstands,

running uphill and so on. It was at that time that a little seed of an Olympic dream was planted inside my heart.

In 1996, when the Olympics were held in Atlanta, USA, I watched some of the sports on television with admiration and envy. My father teased me by saying "Will I see you on TV one day, representing China in the Olympic Games?" I smiled silently as it was all so far away for me at the time – I was not even on the Shanghai Swimming Team, so how could I realistically aim for the top podium in the world? But, even so, his little tease fired up my motivation even more and I was determined to do my best and do it well, every single day, to realise my big dream.

One day, while my parents were waiting outside the swimming pool, a lady approached them, talking about the sport of sailing and asked about my year of birth. She was the Shanghai Optimist Sailing Coach, Juliet, who was trying to find some new sailors for the team. After two weeks of training camp, I was selected as one of the three girls. I became a full-time sailor not long after my tenth birthday.

In the next two decades while on the sailing team and during my spare time I always would do some self-study and read lots of books or reflect on my sailing while others watched the TV, played computer games or cards, or just gossiped.

In some ways, the fact that I cannot hear properly helps me focus on the task at hand and I am rarely distracted by other things. I am also never woken up by heavy rain or thunder in the middle of the night, which helps me get good quality sleep.

On another occasion we were caught in a heavy storm, gusting up to 40 knots, with the waves rising to five metres high. Unfortunately, the coach boat had capsized, flipped over by a gigantic wave, and was upside down. We were all in the middle of the sea, with no land or buildings in sight. The more experienced sailors slowed down to sail close together, as a big group, in case someone encountered a problem.

For the first time I cried on my sailboat as I have never felt so close to death. Humans are so insignificant when exposed to the force of nature. I prayed to god, hoping he would save us from this disaster. After three hours of bouncing up and down while slowly reaching to the shore we finally got to the closest beach before the daylight disappeared. Luckily none of the equipment on our boats was damaged that time (which was quite unusual) and the coaches were picked up by a local fishing boat not long after.

Though this horrible and unforgettable experience occurred when I was still less than 11 years old, it never stopped me chasing my dream as I believed the rainbow would always shine after a storm.

The first boat I sailed is called 'Optimist' class, a small dinghy designed for teenagers under 15 years old. Within a year I became the National Champion; two years later, Asian Champion; I ended my first boat with two World Champion title and one Asian Games Champion.

As I was marching towards the 2004 Athens Olympics in an adult boat, I was diagnosed having a tumour in my left leg bone. I had the operation at the end of 2002 and missed the Athens Trials. It took me a year to come back to sail again and this time, I was aiming firmly for the 2008 home Olympics in China.

After I won the World Championship in 2006 in Laser Radial Class as well as the Asian Games beating all male sailors, I successfully made myself into the list to represent my country for the Games where sailing was held in Qingdao, Shandong Province. I made history to be the first medallist in sailing in China after I claimed the Bronze medal. But in my heart I immediately set the goal for gold for the next Olympics in London.

Ironically, my hand bone broke during a cycling accident six months before the Games began. At that time I did not know whether I would be able to sail the Olympics in such a short recovery time. Nevertheless, the next day after my operation, I started to do gym training while rehabilitating my hand. I used meditation everyday, just as I would practise sailing every single day.

On 6 August 2012, when I finished the medal race in the first place, I couldn't help screaming and finally realised my dream and becoming the first ever Olympic sailboat Champion in Asia and China. I was so honoured to be selected as the flag bearer for China at the Closing Ceremony. After having claimed the World Sailor of the Year 2012, my speech touched everybody:

There was a time that I complained that god was unfair to me for I share only half of the listening ability of ordinary people. There was a time when I complained that god was unfair to me for my left eye can barely make out any character. And there were times when I faced retirement due to my hand and leg surgery, as well as some other severe injuries. However, I am lucky enough to have been able to continue sailing to this day and conquered all the difficulties and setbacks that confronted me. Looking back, all those mentioned were merely testing elements and processes god was using to try to figure out whether I was worthy of becoming an Olympic Champion.

Sailing gives me the opportunities to chase my dreams; sailing presents me the stage to show my potential; sailing provides me the capacity to see, feel and explore the world; and sailing leads me to a path of a better life – a life full of vitality, excitement and joyous experiences.

Nowadays I have learnt to cherish every square inch of my body and be grateful for all it can do and how it supports me. Life is full of happiness when I truly open my eyes with a positive attitude and embrace it, appreciate it with my whole, genuine, loving heart.

Thank god for sailing! What a life-long sport!"

However my third Olympic campaign did not go as I planned. One month before the Games, both of my shoulders got so badly injured that I could not

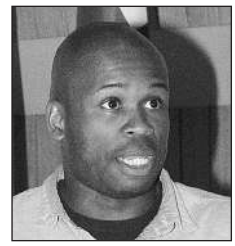
sail or train at all. I had to use the pain-killer injection to allow me to race but even with that I still had to sail with a huge amount of pain which heavily affected my performance. Though I only finished 18th overall in the end, I do not regret my choice, as I know when I look back, I gave everything I could to the sport I love.

I am now transferring into a sport media freelancer, doing some sailing commentary, race reporting, and interviewing athletes. My next dream is to share more sporting stories all over the world and inspiring the young generation to make their life journey shining.

You can follow me on Instagram and Facebook Page via "xulijia11" and hopefully together we can make sport a powerful tool to improve everyone's quality of life.

MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Oluseyi SMITH (CAN)



Hello everyone, I am Oluseyi Smith and I am a two-time Olympian from London 2012 (Athletics) and PyeongChang 2018 (Bobsleigh).

I do not like watching the video of the men's 4x100 final from the London Olympic Games. It has been seven years and I am certain I have only watched the video no more than six times in its entirety. I cannot explain this emotional reaction even after so many years have passed, but I can certainly explain what we were feeling on that day. You must understand, before the race we just watched (the final) we were coming off an amazing qualifying race. We were ranked 11th or 12th in the world going into the games but posted the 3rd fastest qualifying times. Even then, the expectations on our performance by most of the public did not extend beyond hoping for a 7th or 8th place finish.

The day of the final we arrived at the warm-up track approximately three hours before the race. We warmed up, got physiotherapy, massage etc. and were all feeling physically great. 45 minutes before the race start, we heard the call on the speakers for the 4x100 finalist to present themselves at call room #1. Our coach brought us together for one last pep talk. He said "boys, there is nothing more I can tell you. Get out there and run like hell". We all hugged our coach and headed towards call room #1. In this room all the teams are seated and facing each other, and officials searched our bags to ensure there are no cell phones or other electronics. This is also the time where the mind games begin. Staring straight into your opponents' eyes testing who will look down first; or just looking down the entire time to avoid the confrontation.

After everyone's bags were checked we stood up and were all marshalled to call room #2. The path between both call rooms snakes through the belly of the Olympic stadium. Above us we could hear the cheers of the 90,000-person stadium packed to the brim. We arrived at call room #2, put our racing spikes on and said our final goodbyes to our teammates. At this point we were separated and sent to the stadium entrances closest to where we would be running our relay legs. The race before the 4x100 relay was won by Mo Farah a Briton and the crowd had been going wild. They were already excited and loud after that race and the announcement of the 4x100 final sent them into another frenzy. As I was walking into the stadium a javelin had been thrown a long distance and a massive cheer erupted throughout the stadium. This cheer coincided with my fist step onto the track, at that moment I felt like I was a gladiator. I had no nerves, no fear just pure adrenaline ready to run the race of my life.

The stadium noise completely dropped once the official instructed the runners to their marks. From ear-splitting roars to a minor whisper, the change in sound gave me goosebumps while I was on the track. As soon as the gun fired the capacity crowd returned to their roar and I went down into my stance. Gavin, our first leg runner was absolutely motoring towards me. I left my mark at the correct time and our exchange was great. I ran down the back straight focusing on my teammate who was mating for me in the 3rd leg position. As soon as I passed him the baton, I started screaming his name and urging him to run faster. I watched as he completed his leg and continued to scream at our anchor as he moved from 5th place to 4th place to 3rd place. Once he crossed the line, I knew we had won a bronze medal and I could not reasonably describe in words the pure joy and ecstasy I was feeling.

We jumped on each other, screamed, shed tears of joy as the realization of what we had done set in. Not just a bronze medal at the Olympic Games but a bronze in the fastest race of all time. Both the Jamaicans and Americans had broken the previous world record. I was mentally going through all the people I would be thanking and showing my medal to when I returned home to Canada; my schoolteachers who introduced me to the sport, my family, coaches, training partners etc. It wasn't until we had begun our victory lap that we noticed we were no longer listed as 3rd but had a DQ next to our name. I thought it was a mistake or a joke first, but the reactions of my teammates confirmed the sinking feeling I had in my stomach. All the people I had planned on thanking, all the mental plans I had already started making would not happen.

Our teammate who ran the 3rd leg approached the rest of us to explain that he had accidentally stepped on the lane line while running his leg. The rules were clear on this; if you step on the line you get disqualified. What made it even more painful was he did not step out of his lane; he just stepped on the line. Whatever advantage he may have gained by stepping on the line was moot, given the gap between us and 4th place was about a meter. During our trip to ancient Olympia the tour guide commented on how previous champions were immortalized in statues that were placed all over the grounds. That was the most difficult thing for me in London. It was not that I wouldn't be an Olympic medalist for life; it was not that I had executed the best race of my life at the most important time; it was not that I would be missing out on sponsorship opportunities back home. The difficult thing was that the performance itself would be forgotten. A DQ in the results page does not tell the story of our triumph. It does not share how four sprinters who individually would not have qualified for the 100m final managed to beat the entire world except for Jamaica (the USA was later disqualified due to a doping infraction).

In the end, it is the nature of sport to create these kinds of stories. We all returned to competition the following years and remained resilient dedicated to

returning to the Games another time. For me, I competed for four more years but did not qualify for the Olympic team in Rio. I switched to bobsledding in the fall of 2017 and was competing at the Winter Olympic Games by February of 2018. It was a fast turnaround and I was able to pick up the sport and excel at it thanks to my years of doing athletics. I was in Canada's fastest sled with Canada's best pilot. All season long we posted the fastest start times and medaled in a few world cups. Unfortunately, in PyeongChang we were only able to finish 6th and I haven't yet figured out what went wrong in PyeongChang.

My story is about resilience determination and maintaining motivation like many other Olympians. What makes it unique is the seven minutes where I achieved a lifelong dream in the most competitive race of all time. What could have been will always be a question hovering over my head. I like to think that even though I don't wake up as an Olympic medalist; I wake up as an athlete who experienced and took part in an incredible event and came back with an interesting story to share.

MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Hrafnhildur LÚTHERSDÓTTIR (ISL)

My name is Hrafnhildur Lúthersdóttir, but you can call me Hilda for short. I am a swimmer from Iceland, and I went to two Olympics, in London 2012 and Rio 2016.

My Olympic journey began when I was about nine years old. I had tried every single sport imaginable and was never the best, so I was not happy and quit. I am a very competitive person so I had to find something that suited me and that I was the best at, naturally. That is when I found swimming. I started fairly "late" compared to others in the sport that started around age five. Here I was, nine years old, going to my first proper swim practice with kids two or three years younger than me. Luckily, that meant I was the best in the group so I was quickly transferred to older groups, and within a few months I had reached my age group, those who would eventually become my family away from home.

Jumping to my teenage years, I trained hard for several years, twice a day in the pool with additional workouts on land (strength training, running, ab workouts, etc.). When I was about 14 or 15 years old, I managed to make it onto the junior national team for my first international swim meet! However, it was in Iceland, so I didn't go too far away from home. But it was an amazing experience and really motivated me to want to go to more international meets, and eventually the Olympics.

I kept training hard and went to several international meets with the junior team, and eventually made it to some bigger meets with the senior national team. In 2007, when I was 16 years old, I was eyeing the Beijing Olympics, and

was close to making a cut for the team. I was competing a lot with another girl from Iceland in the same events and we went back and forth making the cut. Shortly before the end of 2007, my coach was fired due to serious allegations and I was without a coach trying to make the Olympics at 16 years old. A lot of wonderful people stepped up and tried to help me, but in the end it was not enough. The other girl was able to make all the events that I was trying to make it in, and she went to the 2008 Beijing Olympics. I decided I did not really like swimming anymore and wanted a vacation, so my family went to Lanzarote for some sun and relaxation. I on the other hand decided to stay indoors watching the Olympics the whole entire trip. I felt I deserved to be there, I belonged in that pool, so after the two week vacation I went back home and straight into the pool to keep training for another four years and I was determined to make the next Olympics in 2012.

Before the 2012 Olympics I had trained hard and was doing well. I made the team and was ecstatic to be able to represent my country at the Olympics finally. We even made a relay team in the 4x100m medley relay. I was so excited. Cut to the training camp in France before the Olympics. My friend wanted to go out to the store to get some snacks for the day and asked me to join her. After some convincing I decided to go with her. In the store I slipped and fell and fractured my elbow. Originally, we thought it was just a bruise or twist, but after x-rays and doctors' appointments we realised it was a bit more serious than we thought. The Iceland team had a meeting at the Olympic village, with my being present, and talked about replacing me for the relay and calling in another girl (the girl who had gone to the 2008 Olympics). I was not about to let that happen and denied it profusely, claiming I could easily swim, and still swim fast even with a broken elbow. Eventually, we decided that I would skip the 100m breaststroke, which was the first event that I would be competing in, in order to give me a bit more time to heal. I swam the 200m breaststroke and was close to my best time. And I swam the relay and was again, close to my best time, and the overall time was close to our fastest time as well.

I went home, healed up, and started training again to do better at the 2016 Olympics. Everything went according to plan; I made the Olympics in three events (200m Individual Medley, 100m Breaststroke and 200m Breaststroke). 2016 was my best year yet swimming-wise, as I went to the 2016 European Championships in London a few months before the Olympics and won three medals (two silver and one bronze) in all of my main events. So, going into the

Olympics I was psyched. It was not easy to medal at Europeans, as many of the best breaststrokers in the world were from Europe, so I was happy and ready to do well in Rio. In the end, I made the finals at the 2016 Olympics in the 100m breaststroke and got 6th place and made 11th place in the 200m breaststroke. Both those placings were the best a female swimmer from Iceland had done at the Olympics, so I was happy, proud, relieved, and all of the emotions.

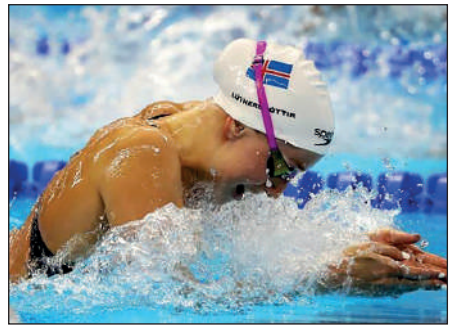
In 2012, I was able to relax and take things in due to having a broken elbow. I thought to myself "just do your best, there is nothing else you can do. Just make it, finish the rest, they can't ask anything more of you". So although it was disappointing to break my elbow right before such a big meet, and then seeing how close I was to my best times even with a broken elbow, it was all meant to be because I could really take in the beauty of the Olympics. Rio in 2016 was fun in a different way since I did better in the pool and could enjoy the Olympics as an athlete.

After the 2016 Olympics, I had a really difficult time getting back into the pool as I was suffering from "Olympic depression". It is a real and serious thing that sadly happens to a lot of athletes after big meets, and when they don't know what their next steps are or do not have clear goals. I was not sure what my next move was going to be, and I was not ready to train for another four years for the Tokyo Games. I kept going for another year and a half but was not as happy about my swimming and did not have as much fun as I had before. So eventually I decided to retire at the age of 26 in January of 2018. It was a long journey of not knowing who I was without swimming as it had been such a huge part of my life for so long, and not knowing what to do with myself as I had never been able to work a proper job in my life. What would I be good at, what do I know other than how to swim and race? With the help of friends, family and teammates I was able to find new things to do and focus on, so today I am happy and healthy, working at my first "real" job!

My Olympic journey consists of a lot of ups and downs, but I was lucky enough to have an amazing support system around me and plenty of opportunities, so I was able to find my way in the end. I try to give back and talk about my experiences with the younger generation to show them that you can achieve anything you dream of as long as you have passion for it and work really hard. The Olympics were a big part of my life and shaped me into the person I am today, and for that I am grateful.

OMEGA

Yakult



Rio 2016

MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Nikol KUČEROVÁ (CZE)

I am Nikol Kučerová; I am from the Czech Republic and my sport is ski cross. I was born and grew up in a small village in the Czech mountains. I started skiing when I was two and a half years old. We skied with other kids on the fields around my grandparents' house and I was maybe the only one, who did not want to walk back up and carry my own skis, so my grandpa had to carry me on the sledges. It was obvious there would be no point to put me in cross country skiing, or any other sports like that. I always liked going downhill and catching speed, on skis or on bikes.

I have an older brother, who is very important to me. He was the one who always pushed me to do crazy stuff and I was more than pleased to follow him. We both started first racing on the bike. We did bike cross since I was five. Then my parents put us on the ski team, because they wanted us to do that beautiful sport.

I started racing alpine skiing when I was six and it was my world. For a couple years I did both, skiing and biking, but then had no more time for both. For skiing you have to travel a lot and follow the snow even in the summer. And also my mum did not really want us to be bike cross racers anymore, because it was quite a dangerous sport.

The Olympics were maybe always my secret dream, but it was not why I did the sport. It was something that was so far away, maybe it could happen one day, but I just loved skiing so much. I never felt it was my goal until I was 16 and then I felt it may be possible. It was more something that I wanted to

do, but would see later. The sport itself was much stronger. I can say that sport made me who I am.

As an alpine racer I represented my country at four Junior World Championships and one World Championship in the adult category in 2009. That was also the year when I tried ski cross for the first time. It was quite a new sport and my brother started to do it earlier. Then he said that it would be perfect for me, since I am a good skier and also keen to do adrenalin stuff. So he took me with him to some events. It was great, but I still stayed competing in alpine.

I was trying to qualify for the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver and I had big chance to do so. Yet when the season started, I got so nervous because of the qualifications. My training was great, but when my race happened, I failed. In the end, I was the first one who did not go. Some years after, I realised that in my head I was not doing it just for myself. It was strange. Of course I wanted to go there, but I was more concentrating on the others; that I have to do it more because of them, my family, coaches and all the people around me, who were helping me in my entire career. I felt that if I did not go to Vancouver, no one is going to speak to me and I put so much pressure on myself; but when it came to that point, nothing actually happened. They still loved me and supported me as usual.

Later that year I tried some more ski cross races and found myself in it. After one season I decided to switch. For the first time in my life I chose sport because I liked it and it was also something completely new. I had lot to learn and I loved every part of it.

In the first World Cup of the new season I came 3rd and it was huge success. But then some health problems started and I had to take lot of pain killers to keep going. After two years of struggling with my shin and lots of up and downs I had to go for surgery. It was so painful and I was dealing with a hard come back but finally I qualified for the Sochi Olympics. I was so happy, but also very nervous, about an injury on the training runs or the competition. So it happened. A few weeks before the Olympics while training I crashed and injured my shoulder. Luckily I was able to wear a brace and with pain killers I was able to compete.

To be honest, I did not feel comfortable to compete in Russia, but I was still happy to be at the Olympics. Just being part of the Czech Olympic team was such an honour. My race was not the best. My training runs before were

so good and I felt comfortable, even though it was a massive track, or maybe because of it. But I had a crash in the qualification run and coming down I was told that I could not compete because I didn't finish the run. I totally collapsed. The pain was all over my body and soul. Then someone came to me and told me, it is not true, I will be able to race, I was counted as the last qualifier. So I went quickly to the doctors, they had to give me some more medicine. The pain killers I had because of the shoulder were not enough in that moment. In the actual race I tried to do my best. I had the best start, but my track was the slowest one and I had to follow after the start section. Unfortunately I was not able to pass and my day was done. It was so frustrating. I was angry but I also made the decision that I am going for better results in the next Olympics. Four years felt at that time like nothing. I remember me and my German friend Heidy crying after the race, hugging each other, and promising that we are going to do that in Korea.

The four year Olympic cycle seems to be so long but believe me, it is not. As athletes we have lots to do, even if there are no Olympic Games happening. There are World Cups, every second year is World Championships and so many other events are happening.

One year after Sochi was one of my best seasons ever. I came 6th in the World Championship and won the University games. But then I injured my knee and had to have surgery for my ACLs and meniscus and then was dealing with another hard come back. At least I was able to concentrate on my studies a little bit more.

The next two seasons were not that good for me, but I did qualify for the PyeongChang Olympic Games. My experience from these games is different. I was not that nervous this time and was enjoying every moment there. My training was going well; I was fast and did not have the big problems with the course like many others had. I was so excited about the race. Eighth in the final was fine; I made it to the quarter finals, but not more. Ski cross is not just about you, but also about the others next to you. I was fighting for my spot in the semis so hard, but unfortunately I was the one, who did not have enough luck. Yet this is also part of the game. I was so sad because I felt that I was able to have a better result than 14th place, but I knew that I did everything for it and I had nothing to be ashamed of. This time I did not make the decision about the next Olympics right away at the finish. It took me one year more. My last season was not the best but I made 7th place in the World Championships, and had some good Europa cup results in the end of the season. I enjoyed skiing on the tracks so I decided to continue until the next Olympics in Beijing 2022.

THE IRRATIONALITY OF THE OLYMPIC DREAM

Noam MILLS (ISR)

In April 2007 I was a young fencer who just recently transitioned from Juniors to Seniors. The Olympic qualification year was just about to begin, and I got the news that I was admitted to Harvard University.

I was very happy and excited about this opportunity, but I also knew I had a difficult decision to make – whether to go to Harvard that summer and take a step back from my competitive career or to defer my admissions and dedicate myself to fencing in an attempt to qualify for the 2008 Olympics.

I consider myself a rational person, so I analysed my options and my chances of making it. I would like to share my thinking process with you.

As I mentioned, I just transitioned to the Seniors' circuit. I was a good Juniors' fencer –I was ranked 1st in the world and won the World Cup Circuit for Juniors– but I did not yet have any significant results in seniors, and fencing is a sport in which athletes peak late, around the age of 30.

To add to that, Olympic qualification in fencing is extremely difficult. In an average World Championships, there are about 200 competitors, whereas in my event in Beijing, Women's Epee, there were only 25 fencers. To make things worse, qualification is by continents – each continent has a certain quota, and Europe, through which Israel qualifies, is the strongest continent in fencing.

In the history of the Olympic Games, Israel has only qualified fencers in foil (fencing has three weapons – foil, epee, and saber). No Israeli epee fencer has ever qualified before.

Lastly, at that point in my career I was not enjoying fencing. Training and traveling took their toll – I was tired, and the transition to Seniors was difficult.

And then there was Harvard – one of the best universities in the world, a place that symbolised my future. I was very excited to go on an adventure at this magical place, which, at that point I have only seen in the movies. I was also already a couple of years older than the average freshman, having served in the military for two years, and I was worried that the more I deferred my studies the less I will fit in with the other students.

Against all these stood just one thing – the Olympic Dream. As a little girl, whenever I had an eyelash fall, I always wished for the same thing –to be Olympic Champion– and going to Harvard that summer meant giving up on that dream.

Rationally speaking, it should have been an easy decision – my chances were very slim, I was not happy, and my future was calling. But I knew I would not forgive myself if in 20 years I'll wake up one morning and know that I had a chance, however slim it may be, to go to the Olympics and I did not even try. And so, I decided to do my best and try.

I started the Olympic qualification year in great shape and with high levels of motivation. But I sucked. I fenced really badly, and my results kept getting worse. It was so bad that in one World Cup, for the first time in my life, I did not even pass the preliminary round. At that point it was clear that I would not be able to qualify directly through the ranking. My only option was to qualify through the European last chance competition that was held at the end of April 2018. I started preparing for that one competition and in the World Cups leading to that final event I fenced a bit better. I still did not achieve any great results, but I started gaining more confidence and believing that I might be able to get that last ticket.

On the day of the qualification competition I was very lucky. I was not lucky because I had an easy draw, or because my competitors were injured. I was lucky to be able to perform at my best on the most important day of my fencing career. I fenced well and at the end of that day I got the ticket to Beijing.

To this day I am grateful for that burst of irrationality that enabled me to fulfil my dream and become an Olympian.

MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Aljaž SEDEJ (SLO)

My name is Aljaž Sedej from Slovenia and I am an Olympian from Beijing and London. I would like to start with a quote of the founder of Judo, Jigoro Kano "The man who is at the peak of his success and the man who just failed are in exactly the same position. Each must decide what he will do next". My goal in judo was an Olympic gold medal, not the qualification but only the medal. Here is picture of the 2012 OI results in my category under 81 kilograms. I won Steven Travis (5th place) at the WC in 2009, he is also the man who beat me in London. I won bronze medallist in the Olympic year at the qualification tournaments. I won the silver medallist for bronze medal in EC 2009 directly after OG Beijing where he won gold. There are only two guys up here that I haven't won. Nakai Takahiro with whom I never fought and Olympic Champion from Korea Kim Jae-Bum, our last fight was back in 2008 when I lost in the last 30 seconds of golden score by koka (minimal score). As you can see, I had a chance to be on this list.

My video presentation includes the following about myself:

My name is Aljaž Sedej and judo is my life. It is a sport that connects body and soul and I am in it with my body and soul. It is a sport that makes me whole and has helped me to find my purpose. I know who I am and what I wish to accomplish and I know what I can achieve. Of course, there are ups and downs and disappointment, but for me that is an inspiration and new experiences from which I am learning from, the stairs that lead me to the next level. The obstacle is high only in my eyes. My heart is telling me not to quit; to go on no matter the situation ahead of me. This is why I am pushing forward and following my

dreams. Because I know my purpose, I know I can do it. This is why I can live my dreams. LAST SIGN: In London we cheer for Aljaž Sedej.

My first results started in 2004, when I won three medals at the Cadet European cups. The same year I finished 7th at the Cadet European Championships. That was a first big disappointment for me. My next big break was my first Junior European medal in 2006. In February 2007 I won my first senior world cup and after, the same year won two titles as a European Champion under 21 years and under 23 years. I was the first Slovenian to do that and the only male judoka in Europe that claimed both titles. This is a video how I became a European Junior Champion.

The results kept coming. The cherry on top was a silver medal in the last year of qualifications for OG in Beijing on Super world cup in Hamburg where I won silver. Now at this time I am flying. I become some sort of golden boy for Slovenian judo on the international level. At the age of 19 I qualified for OG in 2008. That was phenomenal. At that time, I felt unbeatable. At that age I really did not have much experience and the pressure of the Olympic Games hit me in the worst kind of way. When I stepped in the venue my heart started beating like crazy. I had a feeling that inside my body everything was collapsing. I did

not know where to go, to cry or to scream. Somehow, I managed to concentrate and step on the mat focused but it was not my day. I lost the first round. I was disappointed but inside my head I know that I gained a very good experience that I have to learn from and use it in London 2012.

Next year I became the first man who won European medal for independent Slovenia. In the bronze medal fight I won the current Olympic champion from Beijing, Ole Bischof from Germany. And I was flying again! The same year I also won the Mediterranean games In Pescara! I am of the roof!

In 2010 I had my first injury. I tore the ligament in my elbow during the fight for the semi-finals in EC 2010. I came back quickly and in 2011 I had my second injury, I tore the side ligament on my right knee. Still everything was ok, no surgery was needed and I came back with wings again; even stronger faster, and willing to fight! I came up with a new special technique that is called Sedej. This is how it looks on the mat.

I qualified easily to London OG and was in the last part of the preparation. Three weeks before the Olympic Games I was in training camp in Hungary. During my warm up, I found five sparring partners for training but after the 4th match I untied my belt, sat down and looked at my coach. It was the best feeling ever; he looked at me and said "what?"; and I replied "I am ready to take the Olympic gold".

Then the 5th sparring partner came to me and asked me to fight and I said I was too tired and that I was finished with the training for today. He asked again, and again, and again and I said OK, one more. In this match I tore the ligaments in my right knee. An operation was needed and my London dream ended. And yet I knew that it was not a huge problem because I still had Rio 2016. I went to London to fight, but no success. We waited with the surgery and with an injured knee I won silver in the Mediterranean games in Mersin 2013. Directly after this competition I went under the knife. Rehab was OK and I came back, but things started to fall apart. Another surgery, torn ligaments in my left knee, came back. Surgery on my right knee and the elbow from the injury in 2010, but I came back.

In my head I could only see OG Rio 2016 and the medal podium.

Beginning of the year 2016 was the last train to catch the qualifications. March 2016 at the National Championship I tore all my ligaments in my left knee, together with the meniscus. Surgery and rehab again. My motivation was not on the high level any more, but I still pushed forward as in my mind there was still hope. After three weeks of rehab one morning I noticed my knee was a bit red. I called my mom, she works as a nurse at the infection clinic, and she

told me not to worry, just mark the red area with a marker and if it will spread then call me. I lay on the sofa and watched television. I put a blanket over my legs and forgot about the leg. My mom called me 45 minutes later. I looked at my leg and it was red from my ankle up to my hip. She kept calm and said: "Don't panic but come to my hospital ASAP". Antibiotics in my vain strong like an atomic bomb and another surgery. I wake up and the doctor tells me: "30 minutes more and you would have lost your leg". Now this was the lowest point in my life. I had to finish my career. I did not know what to do next. It was not my choice to finish and that is really hard to overcome mentally.

I stayed in my apartment, and depression was knocking on my door like crazy. My dreams were shattered. My rock at that time was my wife. I got married after OG London 2012. She was amazing and pushed me to set a new goal in my life; education.

I started to study and first finished a degree in the field of security and criminal justice. Now I am finishing my master thesis in the same field and another degree at a different faculty in the field of spot training. I am thinking about getting my PHD in the future. I also study two courses at the International judo Olympic academy, Coach level 2 and Judo manager.

My goal now is to teach my son how to get up after he falls down and stand by his side.

I would like to finish with a quote of Mohamed Ali: "A man who views the world the same at 50 as he did at 20, has wasted 30 years of his life".

MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Samantha WELLS (AUS)

My name is Samantha Wells, and I competed for Australia at two Winter Olympic Games (Sochi, 2014, and PyeongChang 2018) in the sport of freestyle skiing, in the discipline of aerials. Having grown up at least eight hours drive from the Australian ski fields, I am frequently asked how I became involved in winter sports. The answer is that I come from three generations of snow skiers, on both sides of my family. My family were never the type to go to beachside resorts for holidays or vacation; we went to the snow to ski. I began snow skiing when I was nine years old.

I am the second born of three children, with a very relaxed older brother. My parents weren't sure what hit them when I came along; full of energy and vigour. In order to manage my energy levels, my mum enrolled me in gymnastics at three years of age. In gymnastics I represented my club, my region, my state and my country and I could not get enough of gymnastics. Gymnastics was my first love, and I was heartbroken when, at fifteen years of age, I completely ruptured my Achilles tendon. This injury ended my gymnastics career.

During the rehabilitation process, I knew that gymnastics was not a feasible option anymore, but I knew I was not finished flipping. Without having discussed this fact with my father, it was he who brought home a printed packet of information. He simply laid the papers down in front of me and said "here is some food for thought". Looking at the paperwork I saw the Olympic Winter Institute of Australia logo on the front of the packet, and the words "Freestyle Aerial Skiing". Flipping through the paperwork I learned about the sport and the pathway from beginner to Olympic standard. Here was a sport that combined my

two passions; skiing and gymnastics, and there was the possibility of competing at the Olympics! I filled out the application form that night and the rest is history.

So, what is aerial skiing? Aerial skiing is a winter sport that certainly is not for the faint hearted. In my sport, we ski in a straight line down a slope toward a two to four metre ramp made from hard packed snow and ice, launching off the ramp and into the air to perform multiple twists and flips, two to three storeys in the air, before making a landing on a very steep, chopped up landing hill before skiing away to the bottom.

Now you might be wondering how a girl from Newcastle would train for a sport like this? The answer is with a lot of travel. I spent eight months of the year overseas and a further two months away from home each year to train and compete in my sport. I spent time refining my skiing technique on snow, working on my strength and fitness in the gym, improving my aerial awareness in the bungee and on trampoline as well as refining my technical skill on the water ramps (an artificial replica of an aerials site that allows athletes to learn and practice aerials techniques with a safer landing into a pool).

I also spent much time each day focusing on my recovery. Undertaking physiotherapy, stretching, ice bathing, eating nutritious foods, napping, sports

psychology, Pilates, video review and of course, sleeping a whole lot; all so that I could transfer my jumps from the water ramps, to snow.

Throughout my sporting career I had a number of goals. Firstly, my aim was to compete at the Olympic Winter Games. Secondly, I wanted to 'make the history books' by making the podium at FIS World Cup events lastly, and above all, I aimed to have fun.

I was fortunate enough to compete at two Olympic Winter Games; both of which were completely different experiences. The opening ceremony in Sochi was incredible. There is nothing quite like the feeling of walking out of the tunnel into the stadium united as team Australia to be received by thousands of spectators. The opening ceremony was a fabulous way to kick off my Olympic Games in Sochi, and the smiles continued throughout the Games. I smiled when I landed my jump in qualification, and even though I did not score enough points to make the final, I was just so thrilled to be living my dream. What made this Games even more special and kept the smiles coming, was the fact that my family were there to share the moment with me; my brother and sister had never seen me jump, and the biggest investors in my life as a sportsperson, my mum and dad, were there to share in the glory of the Olympic experience; to see my dream, and I think theirs too, come true.

My experience in PyeongChang was not quite as smiley. This is a picture taken on my last planned training jump before my Olympic competition. Clearly, things were not going as planned. I came into the PyeongChang event with my sights set on a personal best performance; though the windy weather conditions had disrupted my preparation plans, I knew my years of preparation were going to see me in good stead.

In my first qualification jump, I chose to perform a triple twisting double summersault; a full-double full. I carried too much speed off the jump and over rotated, touching my back on the landing. My second qualification jump I chose to step down the degree of difficulty and aim for a clean landing; but it was not to be. With a really nice jump in the air, a last second adjustment into the landing hill, saw me touch my back to the snow again, losing vital landing points. I did not qualify for the Olympic final, and my career as an aerial skier was over.

This picture was taken in the finish area of the aerials site directly after my second failed qualification jump. It is hard to describe what I was feeling at this point, all I can say is that it felt like everything and nothing all at once. I had this

horrible sinking feeling in my chest knowing that I had just taken my last chance to realise my true potential and I was overcome with a sense of disappointment in the fact that I made that small adjustment into the landing and hadn't had the guts to commit to the landing. I felt like I had let so many people down; my support team, my coach, my family and myself. I just wanted to disappear.

So, what does a girl do after such a disappointment? I got involved in all of the cultural activities of the Olympic Games. All of my life I have found significant solace in the creative arts and I thoroughly enjoyed exploring and participating in all of the cultural activities of the Games. I also went to as many sporting events as possible in support of my fellow Australian teammates. The Australian Team that competed in PyeongChang in 2018 is like no other team that I have ever been a part of; the massive sense of comradery and respect between players was hugely obvious; we were fierce supporters of one another, and no Australian athlete competed without an Aussie team cheer squad there to back them. Celebrating the closing ceremony with these teammates was the best way to farewell the Olympic Games and my career as an aerial skier. It is memories of this team that will punctuate my Olympic memories, and I leave my sport knowing that I had an amazing team; filled with the support of those who loved me no matter what, those who supported me in my losses and celebrated my wins, those who were there with me every step of the way, those who I grew up with that supported me from afar, and of course my family.

The greatest thing that I took away from my Olympic experiences is summed up nicely in the following quote by Helen Keller:

"…Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much…"

OLYMPIAN STORY

Mariya KOROLEVA (USA)

I was born in Yaroslavl, Russia, which is located four hours northeast of Moscow. In 1999, when I was nine years old, my dad was offered a job in San Francisco, CA as a software engineer, and we immediately jumped at the chance to live a better, more comfortable life in the United States. The 1990's was a difficult decade for Russia – the economy tanked after the collapse of the Soviet Union and even highly educated people like my parents struggled to make ends meet financially.

Once we moved to California and I started school, my parents wanted me to join a sports team or club so that I could assimilate into the new environment and learn English. Fatefully, I received a flyer at school for a crash course in synchronized swimming with the Walnut Creek Aquanuts. Little did I know, this was one of the best synchro clubs in the nation. I did the crash course and enjoyed it so I joined the year-round team. For the first few years I would say I was usually in the middle of the pack in terms of talent and potential. There were always a few girls who performed better than me and showed more promise. At that point in my career I didn't even have an Olympic dream, simply because I never saw it as a real possibility for me.

When I was 14 years old, I was offered a spot on the Senior "A" team, which is the top team in the club. I was the youngest athlete and was swimming with girls who were in their mid-20s. That year, the team coach told me that I had the potential to go to the Olympics if I dedicated myself to this sport and trained hard. It took that *one* comment from *one* coach to give birth to my Olympic

dream and make me believe in my own potential. From then on I set my eyes on the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

Even though my goal was to compete in the Olympics, I also knew that getting a college education was extremely important. I was not going to be an athlete forever and wanted to have a degree under my belt by the time I retired. So, I looked at universities that had a strong synchronized swimming program and was ultimately accepted to Stanford University. Stanford was the perfect place for me - it is one of the top universities in the world and it had a great synchro program. I could pursue both of my dreams at the same time!

My freshman, sophomore, and junior years (2009-2011) were a blur. I was taking classes, competing for Stanford, and simultaneously training on the National Team. There were countless training camp trips, exams taken on planes, and stressed out nights finishing a class paper after evening practice. My original goal was to take a leave of absence during my junior and senior years to train full-time for the London Games, but because of internal politics in USA Synchro I ended up returning to Stanford in the middle of my junior year. Additionally, during this time my dad was seriously ill and it was tough for me to be away from home and to be unable to support my mom and brother. All of this caused me to be constantly stressed and emotional, and the only way I could manage was by having weekly sessions with a therapist.

I finally decided to return to the National Team and a few months later in November 2011, I competed in the 2012 Olympic Team Trials and was selected to be a member of the 2012 Olympic Duet with Mary Killman. The following year (2012) turned out to be the hardest year of my life. In January I had surgery on my back because of ongoing pain. My dad was still very sick and I was living halfway across the country, which made me feel constant guilt for not being close to my family. Then, a few weeks before the Olympic Qualifier in March 2012 I found out that two of my teammates had filed an arbitration against USA Synchro, claiming that the Olympic Duet Trials had been executed incorrectly and calling for another trials. In short, my teammates were trying to take away Mary and my Olympic Duet title. Talk about added stress in an already stressful time!

We ended up winning the arbitration but the entire process left a rift in the USA Synchro community. There were many people who believed that Mary and I were not the rightful duet to compete in this Olympics, and that negative energy was hard to deal with going into London. In addition, the U.S. team

did not end up qualifying for the Olympics so we felt even more pressure to perform well.

Any athlete's first Olympics is always a blur, and my experience was no exception. Everything was overwhelming and amazing at the same time and I did not even fully grasp the fact that I was competing at the Olympic Games until after it was all over. Mary and I finished 11th, which I consider a great accomplishment given everything we had to go through that year. I was proud of us even though the U.S. synchro community did not seem to agree. Although I never planned or wanted to compete in two Olympics, I suddenly got a burst of motivation as I was watching the Closing Ceremony in London. I decided that after graduating from Stanford in 2013 I would return to full-time training on the National Team and go for the Rio 2016 Olympics.

However, fate had other plans! When I tried out for the National Team in the summer of 2013, I did not get selected. I was told that I was too old (at age 23), not fit enough, not flexible enough, and that they wanted to focus on the younger, up-and-coming generation of swimmers. This broke my heart. After everything I went through in 2012 it hurt that I would not even get a chance to show what I can bring to the team. My friends, family, and coaches all told me that the writing was on the wall – this was the time for me to retire from synchro and start "normal" life. And yes, that would have been the logical choice, but something inside of me told me I wasn't quite ready to be done yet.

I decided to return to my home club and train there for one season. I started graduate school at the University of San Francisco, began coaching, and got a professional internship. The following summer I once again competed at the National Team trials and ended up winning! This time they had no choice but to put me on the team, and a year later I was named to the 2016 Olympic Duet with my new partner Anita Alvarez. This was my redemption moment, and it felt great!

The year leading up to Rio wasn't nearly as stressful as 2012 but it still came with its own challenges. A concussion early on in the season left me with the residual effect of depression. Even though there was an amazing amount of support for Anita and I going into Rio, I still battled feelings of sadness and was unmotivated. In the middle of the year I just knew that this would be my last Olympics. I was tired of the elite athlete lifestyle – training 8-10 hours a day, six days a week, being unable to take a sick day or vacation, having no money

because we received no support from the U.S. Olympic Committee, and having to put my professional goals aside while I trained. I was ready to retire.

Anita and I finished 9th in Rio and were very happy with that result. The previous season we placed 12th at the World Championships, and moving up three spots in one year is unheard of in our sport. I finished my athletic career on a high, which I will always be thankful for. Although I was mentally prepared for retirement, it was still a difficult transition from being an elite athlete to "normal" person, finding a new goal to work towards, and more importantly, finding myself *outside* of sport.

It has definitely been a tumultuous journey but I am thankful for every piece of it because it made me the strong, passionate woman I am today. Nowadays I still coach part-time for my home club in Walnut Creek, CA and work full-time at Visa (the company I dreamed of working for for years). I also blog about my Olympic experiences and discuss topics that are not talked about enough in the sports community like motivation, mental strength, sport-life balance, etc. I know that I will always be an Olympian, but now I know that I am much more than that, and I can't wait to see what the future holds for me.

MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Hilal HILAL (TAN)

I would first like to say that this was a dream come true for me. Ever since I was a young man who just started training to compete, I had one goal which was to win, make my family and country proud and also make the Olympics.

I have a few videos for you that will give you a slight idea of how my Olympic experience was. These are all the videos I had saved on my Snapchat.

There is not a lot I can explain about my experience as the videos speak for themselves. My excitement can be seen and heard by you all.

From the first day I arrived, all I wanted to do was share with everybody about how things actually are in the village. Walking past all the famous athletes around the village and the venues was really magnificent. I cannot forget all the athletes I saw around.

My performance in Rio was the greatest ever. I have never swam that fast ever in my life, till that day. I do not know if it was the excitement or what but I had a good feeling about the race prior to it. I was warming up and the water felt really nice and cool. I still remember the feeling I had when I was warming up. I only easy swam for 200m and I was out, telling my coach that that was enough and I felt great and had a good feeling about the race. My sister had flew in to watch me race that day. The time finally came when I had to put all my training and sacrifices to test. I put my racing suit on and stayed calm until I walked behind the blocks. I stared down at the pool and did my pre-race rituals. The referee then signaled for us to get onto the blocks and get ready to dive in. That is when I just went to full race mode. Completely zoned out, I did not even

hear my sister shout my name till after my race. Then the start buzz went off and I was off the blocks like a rocket and just started swimming as fast as I could and before I knew it, I was at the other side staring up on the big screen and finally noticing my name with a number one next to it. This meant that I had won the heat with a personal best time. The chills that went through my body were unexplainable. I then got out of the pool, did not swim down and just walked as fast as I could to see my sister and hug her. We were all so happy and then my coach joined us a few minutes later.

That whole day was just a beautiful day. I remember having lunch with my sister and going around Brazil that very same day.

The remaining days were just filled with laughter, meeting new people, enjoying the Brazilian beach, hanging out with friends and just enjoying the whole Olympics experience.

That is what I would like to share with you all. I hope you have enjoyed it.

MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Valentina MARCHEI (ITA)

"Sport as a school of life" was a motto that I became very familiar with during my childhood in Milan, Italy. A motto, which I inherited from my father, Marco Marchei, a two-time Olympian in the marathon event (Moscow 1980 and Los Angeles 1984).

My father was my first and longest tenured mentor, during my time as a professional figure skater. He was never one of those fanatic dads. He would bring me to competitions and barely watch them. He always told me that if I wasn't having fun anymore, I could change to any other sport. As long as I was practicing something, he was happy with it. Through his guidance, I learned what it meant to honour a commitment and to have dedication and trust in myself, all skills I utilized to invest myself into skating.

For many years, it was my own run, my own victory, my own journey. It felt good to be in charge, in the center of attention, but it was also hard to be far away from my family to follow my dreams. Through my journey, I lived in several different countries, such as the United States of America, Russia, Latvia and France, and travelled around the world to compete.

In all of these years, I was injured a lot and was defeated a lot. A few times, I even touched the rock bottom, forcing me to reset everything. One such moment was in 2006, when I had the chance to qualify for my first Olympic Games, in Italy – my country.

I was 19 years old and was not able to handle the pressure of the moment. I ended up not making the team. While I was crying in front of the television,

watching the Games, my family was always there for me. They held my hand through every tear and through every time I said I would give up. They helped me to stand back up and start from zero using only my pure passion.

2010 was another challenging year. I was once again in contention for a spot on the Olympic Team. I was so very close to making the only spot available that I could taste it.

However, once again, I did not make it to Vancouver. Although I won the Italian nationals that year, Carolina Kostner (one of the strongest skaters in the world) won the European Championships a few weeks later to secure her spot and prevent me from achieving my dream.

Instead of crying in front of the television, I was hired by the national TV channel to commentate the games. Without realising it, I found myself opening up a bunch of new opportunities that would later become my identity outside of skating.

These types of adventures give you extra energy to restart motivated and challenged; challenges most of the time shape us into fighters.

2010 was the year I decided to really go for it. It was also when I decided to do it for myself, not for a medal or for the glory, but just for me.

In 2014, I finally qualified for my first Olympic Games in Sochi. I had dreamed of the moment for more than eight years and I was ready. I knew every step, every feeling that I owned I was ready to skate like I had never done so in any competition in the 20 years of my career.

Skating over the Olympic rings on that ice was a dream come true. Not only did I skate my best in the ladies event, finishing 11th, but Team Italy ended up 4th in the team event, which was quite a surprise for the entire Italian movement. I mean, we were fourth in the world. Can you believe that? For a girl that was chasing the Olympic adventure since she was eight years old this was a huge accomplishment. Also, living the atmosphere of the village was so unique and inspiring that it gave me even more motivation to go for another dream: making it to another Olympic Games.

2014 was also the year of my biggest encounter, Ondrej Hotarek. He quickly became my partner in crime on the ice.

I was 28 years old and he was 30.We were just back from Sochi, where we competed together in the team event, but in two different disciplines. He was a pair skater and was ready to end his career. I was a very motivated single skater who was certainly not ready to call it quits.

We played around with few pair elements just to keep him in shape. He was lifting me, he was throwing me around the ice, quite challenging and different for a girl afraid of heights and used to doing everything by herself.

That feeling of the wind over my face, the flying, the speed, brought me back to my seven-year-old self that just started to skate, and here I was falling in love with skating all over again.

For the skating world our age was considered retirement age. Nobody would ever believe and trust a couple like ours, who aimed to compete on the international stage, but we were having fun, and we thought why not? Why not challenge ourselves one more time?

A new discipline for me (after a 20-year career as a single skater), meant starting from the basics. It required a lot of work. Our heart, instead, was telling us to try and soon we proved that limits were just in the eyes of people watching us, not ours. In four months' time, we won the nationals. In five, we were fourth at European Championships (I was fourth the year before in the ladies event). Most importantly, in four years, we were competing at the Winter Olympics in PyeongChang and I was one of the first in the World to compete in two different disciplines in two consecutive Games.

Not only did we make history, breaking all the Italian records possible in the

pair event, but we skated the performances of our lives. No mistakes and a full arena of spectators on their feet, dancing and clapping during our routines. Not even in our wildest dreams would we have imagined it.

It was amazing to think we started our journey just four years before with just us and our very small team believing in this adventure. It all started as a game and then became our reality. He was carrying my dream and I carried his. I will always be thankful to Ondrej for the trust and the patience he extended to me.

My story is about not waiting to be ready, but about daring to dream and chasing it all costs. My story is about not fearing the future, because it will never go the way you believe it will but trusting the process and finding yourself at an even better 'finish line' than expected. My story is not about me, but about the people I met and worked with along the way.

I might not have won heavy medals. I am actually the queen of fourth place finishes (yes, in PyeongChang, Team Italy placed 4th again, but with the strongest national team in Italian history). But the shout of joy at the end of my team event performance felt like the shiniest gold I've ever received.

It is the journey, not the results, which will shape you into the best version of the athlete and person you could ever dream of becoming.

Sport as a school of life. Dare to dream.

AN OLYMPIC JOURNEY

Jérémy MAILLEFER (SUI)

My name is Jérémy Maillefer. I am a rower from Switzerland, born on 23 August 1988 in the Lausanne area. I am the fourth in a family of six children. Here is my Olympic journey.

I always loved sports and physical activity as a kid. So much so that it was difficult for me to choose only one sport. I tried many and finally stuck with rowing at the age of 15. At that time, I was playing with my friends more than pulling hard on the oars, but my coach saw potential in me and pushed me to train seriously when I was 17. A few months later, I was on the junior national team; something that I never thought I could achieve. Each day of training and competition was a new discovery and I was extremely motivated. At this point, rowing was my priority and I went on to claim three Swiss champion titles and took part in six world championships (1x Junior, 4x Under-23, 1x Elite). In 2011, my teammates and I qualified our boat, the Swiss quadruple sculls, for the London 2012 Olympic Games by taking ninth position at the World Championships in Bled, Slovenia. Up until that point, everything in my rowing career was on a crescendo. I got stronger and faster each year, avoiding injuries and managing to study sport sciences alongside rowing. It was not easy, but I loved it!

However, the year 2012 –which was supposed to be the highlight of my career competing in the London Olympic Games– did not go as planned. I started to have spasms in my left leg when I was rowing. It did not hurt but prevented me from controlling how I applied force into my rowing strokes. Synchronized acceleration is key in team boats and I could not do this properly

anymore. Despite being in top Olympic form, I was slow on the water. How frustrating! Deciding to never give up, I kept training hard to stay fit and saw multiple doctors and specialists for my leg. Each one thought that they knew what was wrong, but no one was able to offer a solution to get me back in the boat. I was going to be the first Swiss rower to qualify a boat and not go to the Olympics. My Olympic dream turned into an Olympic nightmare… As my crew could not wait for me, trials between the two substitutes were organised and –thankfully– my little brother Augustin won. He took my seat and even stroked the Swiss quad in London at the age of 18. I was very proud of him and was in London to support him. But as happy as I was for him, you can image how bittersweet of an experience it was for me.

After the London Olympics, I kept training and consulting specialists, hoping to make a comeback. I even underwent surgery on my spinal cord, but it didn't change anything. Looking back, I can say that the 2012 season was de facto the end of my rowing career, even if mentally and emotionally it took me longer to turn the page. It felt like someone stole the cherry on top of my cake. A cherry that I had worked so hard for. Although I have now accepted what happened, it is still hard and it will always be a sensitive topic for me. I still get emotional when I think too much about it. It is an invisible scar that I will keep for the rest of my life.

Looking on the bright side, not having participated in the Olympics forced me to rethink how I saw my career in order to overcome not being completely devastated. Going to the Olympics would have been easy if I did not have this leg problem. All the hard work was already done. I just had to go, race hard, and become an Olympian. Not having gone through that experience was a much bigger challenge that made me grow stronger as a person. It is easy to accept victory and success, but much harder to accept failure and defeat. All of

my life, I have worked hard to be successful in order to avoid losing. Here are some personal reflections I have had and would like to share with you:

- Rowing felt like it was my life and that I wouldn't exist without it. I now see rowing as a very important chapter of my life, but not the whole book. Sport is great, but life has so much more to give!
- I used to care only about winning, about achieving my goal. I now focus on doing my best and being happy with that regardless of the result. How can one be disappointed of oneself after having done your best?
- Instead of seeing my career as a failure because of my non-Olympic participation, I now cherish the journey that I had to go through while aiming for the Olympics. I learned so much and had so many good experiences… how could this be a failure?
- I now am aware that I cannot have everything under control and that to achieve a dream –whether is it going to the Olympics or something else– some luck is required on top of all the hard work.
- I find it very important to maintain other ambitions alongside a career in sport as much as possible, because no one has everything under control nor can know when your sport career will end or what will happen next.

The other good thing about having to retire from rowing is that I had a lot of time for me all of a sudden. It allowed me to practice many new sports I couldn't before, like mountain biking, ski mountaineering, running, and even rowing at fun regattas with family and friends. I was also able to travel, study abroad, learn English, build a relationship, get married, become a father… Sport has brought me a lot, through the good and bad times. I regret nothing and work every day on finding the right balance in my life, because it is through balance that happiness is found. I wish you all the best in whichever journey you are on!

MY OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

Katja VOLKOVA (FIN)

My name is Katja Volkova and I will be presenting my Olympic story. To begin with, I was born in St Petersburg in Russia. When I was four years old, our family decided to move to Finland. At the age of seven years old, my mum took me to gymnastics. However, according to my coach back then, I was first of all too old. I was not flexible and my shoulders were up in the ears. Luckily, I had long legs and my dad is tall, and I was given the opportunity to join the rhythmic gymnastics team ElannonIsku in Helsinki. Not surprisingly, I was never the star of our team, but I was motivated and wanted to do all the exercises my coach advised me to do.

I fell in love with gymnastics as soon as I started doing it and it made me who I am today. At the age of 12 I was already practising two times a day, but because I had to compensate for the lack of talent, I woke up every morning to do extra stretching before the two trainings of the day. I have taken part in several European and World Championships but I have always been the first one to disqualify from the finals, which ended up actually becoming a phobia for me. In 2015, I was again competing in the world championships and was disqualified from the finals by 0,005 points. The lowest possible point that can be. This was the turning point in my professional career. After the world championships, and the fact that I was again disqualified from the finals, I decided to put all in and see where it takes me. So, at the age of 18, still in high school in Finland, I decided to move away from home to a training centre one hour away from Helsinki, which is not a very typical move for Finnish athletes,

but I really wanted to enhance my training facilities. Back then gymnastics shared the halls with basketball players, which meant that we had to roll up the carpets before every training session. And the carpets were not even the same as in the competitions.

For these reasons, I moved to the training centre, where I could only focus on the trainings. Thanks to our amazing sporting high school, I was also able to graduate from high school with flexible arrangements. The Finnish schooling system is the best in the world, if you have not heard that already. I practiced eight hours a day and gymnastics was basically my job. Yet, my parents had to cover all the expenses, the annual budget being 30 thousand a year with no sponsors. Yet, this move was worth it, since I became the best gymnast in Finland.

Three months before the Rio Olympics, the last qualifying competition was held in Rio as well, in which I placed third and made the cut for the Rio 2016 Olympics, which I still think is the best moment in my sporting career.

It was a moment of making Finnish Olympic history by making the cut for the first time in 16 years and being the fourth person to represent Finland in Gymnastics ever.

When I saw the results on the board and I was screaming non-stop, my

coach instead remained calm and casually commented “I saw this coming”. I do think though that she went to scream in the bathroom but wanted to stay cool.

You should have seen my face when receiving two suitcases full of team Finland clothes. I might have organised several fashion shows to my family. When arriving at the Olympic village, the super star athletes who shared the same lines in the cafeteria amazed me, but on the other hand I was dreaming of going to the pool and lie in the sun. I was so exhausted. Since my coach thought that six hours of practicing, which was the maximum training time at the Olympic village, was not enough, I had to warm up and run outside the hall. The guards would not let me in. Finally, the doom day came, gymnastics being the very latest sport in the timetable of the Olympic Games.The fact that I was walking to the Olympic stage representing Finland in gymnastics for the first time in 16 years, seeing a huge Finnish flag and knowing that also the President of Finland was there to cheer me up and watch me perform, I should have had a unique feeling and adrenaline flowing in my blood. And yet, I did not; I simply felt nothing. The only memory I have from the performance itself, is me finishing the last routine, kissing the floor and thinking of tasting all of the ice creams they had in the restaurant. When it comes to the performance itself, I only know that I did all the four apparatus; hoop, ball, clubs and ribbon with no mistakes. I also know that I made Finnish Olympic history with my

placement being the highest of all time, placing at 21st. I basically was a robot performing on the Olympic stage. Being able to compete in Olympic Games has always been my biggest dream. At the age of 19, when competing in Rio, I had achieved everything what I could even think of. With that glory, I was being offered sponsorships. Yet, I did not take them. Instead, I decided on quitting my professional career at the top of the mountain. Ironically, with that decision, I received the biggest media coverage than ever in my professional career. My phone was literally ringing non-stop for two weeks in a row, the journalists asking and speculating why did I end my professional career at the Olympics. One answer to the question was simply the poor training facilities in Finland, which sparked discussion not only in gymnastics but also wider in the society. Taking a step forward and looking at the training facilities in Finland today, I am thrilled to announce that the conditions in gymnastic teams have improved a lot. There even will be a separate hall for gymnastics built in Helsinki in the upcoming year and I am looking forward seeing many gymnasts from Finland at the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020. For me, it was never about the glory and fame, but the love and passion for the sport. Like I said in the beginning, I was never the natural talent. My parents had to negotiate with the coach so that they would let me in and be able to practice. I was too old at the age seven, I wasn't even flexible, but luckily I had long legs, so they let me in. What I also got is the charisma, passion and love for the sport. Those are the things why I am here to tell you about my Olympic story. My message forward is to not underestimate yourself by your age. If you have the passion and love, it will carry you and take you closer to your dreams. I am now 21, I have competed in the Rio Olympic Games. In contrast, with the decision to quit after Rio, I have also been able to upgrade the status of many young gymnasts in Finland and cannot wait for what is yet to come. Thank you.

OVEP DEBATER 2017[1]

conducted by the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka
and presented by Thinali Ovindi RATHNAYAKE,
H Mudiyanselage Jayani Buddhini Kumari HERATH
and Chathumini Apoorva Herath EKANAYAKE (SRI)

Executive Summary

The National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Sri Lanka in collaboration with the International Olympic Committee launched "OVEP DEBATER 2017", a Youth Debate Programme on Olympic Educational Values. The aim of the programme is to give a new message to the society while educating masses through sports. The methodology adopted is to educate school children on Olympic values as it will greatly help the younger generation to adopt these values into their lives; "The best place to start teaching values is the school", the first ever debate programme under the Olympic Values Education was conducted as a pilot project. The project created a new culture interested in practicing the five Olympic Educational Values in the society as a building block of our society.

Background

As a strategic move the National Olympic Committee, Sri Lanka took an initiative to promote Olympism among youth in Sri Lanka and in the South Asian region by implementing a series of successful programmes / projects based on Olympic education with the start of the New Millennium.

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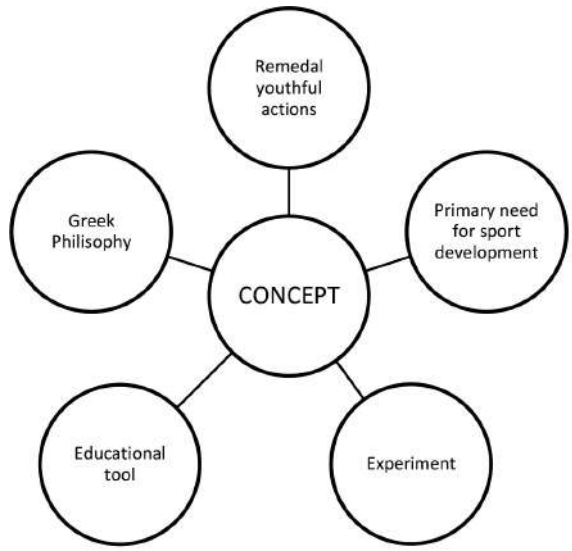
1. Extract from: B.L.H. Perera, Visiting Professor, Department of Sport Science and Physical Education, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka ¦ Programme Director, Olympic Solidarity Advanced Sport Management Course, Sri Lanka.

The Project

The concept of "DEBATE" is a new approach and was not administered as a learning tool or to promote "Olympic Educational Values". The experimental approach to the project involves several key success elements: concept, operational mechanism, the facility used, the model itself, the test conditions, expert panel, debate content, and selection of panel of judges, timing and segmentation.

The Concept



The evolution of the concept of DEBATE in Olympic education is graphically presented in the Illustration

The Pilot Project

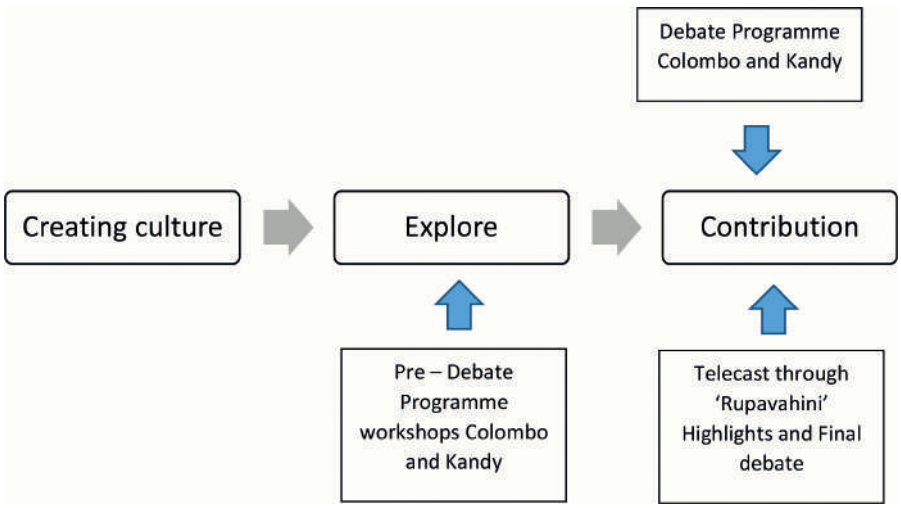
The pilot project initiated by NOCSL involving 20 schools from two districts: Colombo and Kandy, represented major ethnic fractions of present society. Also, the selection of the schools provided a healthy gender balance for the project. The project operated under the direct supervision of the NOCSL. A panel of experts had collectively contributed with diverse set of knowledge in Sport Management, Physical Education, Olympic Studies and Sport Science.

The DREAM was a reality; an attempt is to share this experience with our counterparts in the region.

The Objectives

The "Three key broad objectives" were tested under the project;

1. To encourage mass participation and the expansion of opportunities for sport and play; to create what Pierre de Coubertin called *"the democracy of youth", rather than limiting to completive nature of sport and physical exertion.*
2. To promote and develop opportunities that are genuinely educational; that assists individuals to gain knowledge.
3. To initiate public debate on Olympic values towards sports and culture.



Debate Content

The debate content was developed in line with the OVEP guidelines. However, an innovative approach was taken in compiling debate topics, and 78 well researched and discussed debating topics were formulated.

OVEP Debater 2017 Topics

- "Fair play" protects possible threats for sport.
- "Joy of effort" is personal and helps to achieve life goals.
- Winning is a milestone, success comes from "Joy of effort".
- Advancing the "Balance between body, will and mind" helps the protection of the environment.
- "Respect" in sport promotes personal integrity.
- Fair play strives for the harmonious development of the whole human being.
- Accept and respect cultural diversity in promoting sports.
- Accepting failures creates space for excellence.
- Joy of effort is the binding thread of life.
- Olympism carries the "beauty to sport".
- "Fair play culture" benefits the community.
- "Joy of effort" is common and helps to achieve collective goals.
- Winning is not everything but making the effort to win is "Joy of effort".
- "Healthy mind in a healthy body" and Olympism promotes living a harmonious life.
- "Respect" in sport promotes reconciliation and nation building.
- Fair play strives for human perfection through sports.
- Respect to moral nobility decides the future of sport.
- Pursuit of excellence is about striving to better oneself.
- Joy of effort is the ultimate success of a competitor.
- Embracing Olympic values can help young people achieve a well-balanced approach of life.

Expert and Media Reviews

The levels of student, peer and school community involvement of the project were measured using a set of performance indicators. In this respect the Expert, Debate Team member review and Media reviews were considered important for future improvements:

> Dr Deanna L Binder (PhD), Adjunct Professor, Institute for Values-Based Leadership, School of Leadership Studies Doctoral Program, Faculty of Applied and Social Sciences, ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY, Victoria, Canada presented her post project review:

Question: Your observation on students' presentations, ideas and research done by them.

– As a pilot project I would evaluate the quality and delivery by students on topics related to values education as outstanding. In the first place the participating students were not athletes familiar with the complexities and challenges of a sport environment. So, one might have expected them to deal rather superficially with the various topics. What was of interest to me was the degree of commitment to reflection and critical thinking on the topics and the passion with which their various points of view were presented (Binder D.: 2018).
– *...it was clear as the various debates unfolded that they had been superbly coached by committed and caring teachers, which also impressed me greatly. It is always very difficult to engage the interest and attention of secondary level schools and teachers in an Olympic project. They have very little time to engage in anything that is not directly related to their curriculum and almost all have no knowledge about the cultural and educational foundations of the Olympic Movement. I was very proud of all of the students (Binder D.: 2018).*

Coordinators' Reports

REPORT
ON THE SPORTS ACTIVITIES

The sports activities were coordinated by Graciela MARTINEZ (ESP), Kathrin FREUDENBERGER (GER), Lucía GIAMBERARDINO (ARG), Maitreyee BANERJEE (IND), Fábio SILVA (POR), Marija LOZANCIC (CRO), Jonathan RUWUYA (ZIM), Sarah VÖGTLI (SUI), Yarden HAR LEV (ISR), Rafael MENDOZA GONZALES (MEX), Richard KOO (CAN), Megan RITCH (USA) and Simone CIACCIONI (ITA).

Track and Field competition

The Track and Field gala took place in the afternoon of the 12th of June and was open to all the participants regardless of their previous experience. The teams were formed based on the discussion groups and it was encouraged for each discussion group to have as many members participate as possible. There were five different disciplines on the agenda with females and males competing separately:

- Long-distance run (1.2 km)
- Standing long jump
- Ball throw
- 100m race
- Mixed relay

The contest started with the coordinators entering the stadium dressed in ancient Greek clothes wearing olive-branch wreaths. They performed a short opening address while introducing the rules to the participants. All coordinators were in charge of the overall supervision of the sports and each coordinator was responsible for a specific sport.

It is worth highlighting the long-distance run for the female participants since it culminated in a nice moment showcasing Olympic solidarity when all of the

runners agreed to run the whole distance together and cross the finish line together holding hands. As expected, the Mixed Relay was the most intriguing event of the day and gathered the loudest cheers from the spectators who did their best to encourage their team to be the first across the finish line.

The whole event was carried out in good spirit with active and enthusiastic cheering from the spectators that ensured a nice atmosphere for all the competitors.

Basketball

The basketball tournament took a 3-on-3 format comprising of six (6) teams of five (5) players, making up a total of thirty (30) players who participated in the tournament. The teams were structured in such a way that promoted inclusion and fairness, hence, the teams were mixed with both males and females, and the level of basketball aptitude was put into consideration. Teams played in a round-robin tournament with games played for fifteen (15) minutes and the first team to reach seven points before reaching the time limit were declared the winner. Also, if teams reached the time limit, the team that scored the most points was declared the winner. There were no semi-final matches played, but rather the top teams after the round-robin were matched to play the final and

3rd and 4th position matches. A positive experience during the tournament involved a combined warming up session before the matches started. This massively reduced the chance of injuries and only two (2) minor injuries were recorded until the tournament ended. This can be a system that can be used for all sports activities during the Young Participants Session to significantly reduce incidence of injuries.

Football

The football tournament started on 5 June. There were four teams with 12 to 13 players each; in total there were 59 players who enrolled in the football tournament. The teams were named after ancient Greek gods and goddesses; Poseidon, Athena, Zeus and Dionysus. Each game would take 40 minutes with a break of ten minutes. After fifteen minutes, the break would introduce the change of side, which was necessary due to the disadvantage of the brightness of the sun, even at six o'clock in the afternoon. Each team had nine players on the field, one goalkeeper, if the team wanted to have one, and eight players. Fortunately, there were many women inscribing in the football tournament, which meant that there were three to four female players in each team. There were no official rules for gender quotes on the field. The organising coordinators however counted on the fairness of each team.

The tournament was played as follows: the organising coordinators aimed for each team to play against the other three teams. This meant that we had four evenings, 5 June, 6 June, 8 June and 9 June, where the teams would play in a "get to know each other" sort of tournament. The semi-final on 10 June meant that scores from previous games were erased and the game started from the beginning. There was quite some fluctuation of players who either swapped teams, quit the football tournament for basketball, tennis or table tennis, or just to enjoy the warm evenings. Therefore, the teams in the semi-final, even though they still had the same names and the same core team, had a completely new

dynamic. This organic change in teams was fortunate, since we did not have to worry that one team would dominate through the whole tournament. Whereas at the beginning of the tournament, the style in playing was at times quite aggressive and physical, and the coordinators had to be installed as referees, by the time of the semi-final, the teams played without referees and in the common language of fairness. Similarly, the quote in gender participation at the beginning was fairly unequal, meaning females did not have as much playing time as the male players, by the end, and after and discursive intervention by the coordinators, everyone despite gender or other characteristics was invited to play and was treated with respect.

One can say that with more time during the session, the participants got to know each other better, which seemingly did affect the way the football tournament's atmosphere was.

Volleyball Tournament

The volleyball tournament was held over six days during the Session. A welcome total of 74 participants registered for the matches with 44 women and 30 men from 56 different countries.

Nine mixed teams composed of seven to eight players in each team took part in the tournament carried out on two volleyball courts. The teams contained players of different levels of skill: "Advanced", "Intermediate" and "Beginner". Each participant signed up according to his/her level of performance. One of the key challenges for each player was to deal with this heterogeneity of different experiences of playing volleyball. The teams were named on the venue

of the Olympic Games: Seoul, Barcelona, Atlanta, Sidney, Athens, Beijing, London, Rio and Tokyo. Each team had at least three matches during the qualifying round. After four days of an exciting qualifying round the best five teams (two teams were tied for the fourth place) took part in the semi-finals on day five of the tournament. The exciting final and the third-place match were carried out on the last day of the tournament. Team Sydney shined with a high skill level and won the first place. Team Tokyo (second place), Río (third place) and Barcelona (fourth place) distinguished with their exemplary teamwork.

In summary, the players showed an impressive internalised understanding of Olympism. On and off the courts the volleyball tournament gave the participants a unique chance to get to know each other, unifying efforts to achieve a common goal, prioritising friendship and fair play – as the principles of Olympism state.

Table Tennis

The IOA Young Participants' Table Tennis Tournament was played over the course of eight days from 5-12 June 2019. A total of 42 players ranging from beginner to advanced skill levels took part in the single-elimination knockout tournament.

Due to the non-standard number of participants, 18 players from the beginner skill-level played in nine first-round matches, with the remaining players given byes into the second round of 16 matches. There was no separation of the draw based on gender.

Matches were self-organised – once the draw was created and posted,

players were expected to find each other and arrange a mutually convenient time to play. The flexibility of this system worked well, although coordinators did need to remind players of the impending cut-offs. Most matches were played within the posted cut-offs for each round, with only two of the 40 total matches defaulted. All matches with the exception of the final were single-set to 21 points.

After four rounds of preliminary matches, the semi-final and final brackets emerged as follows:

Giorgi Sulaberidze (GEO)

Karin Agassi Saloniki (ISR)

Karin Agassi Saloniki (Israel)

Annika Jedliczka (AUT)

Annika Jedliczka (AUT)

Habibur Rahman (BAN)

Agassi Saloniki (ISR) defeated Jedliczka (AUT) in the best-of-3-sets final (21-19, 21-16).

This was a successful tournament with high levels of engagement demonstrated by all players. Congratulations to everyone involved.

Swimming Gala

The Swimming Gala was held 12 June at 10am, where all participants of the session accumulated in the swimming pool area to participate and experience one of the most fun events of the session. The event had friendly competitions as well as fun swimming relays where around 50 participants took part.

The programme included four competitive events (Mix Breaststroke - two heats, Mix Backstroke – two heats, Mix Freestyle – five heats, Mix Butterfly – two heats and two fun events (Swimming Relay/Egg and Spoon – four heats and Changing T-shirts Relay – two heats). The participants were segregated in different heats in terms of their swimming skill as professional or amateur to keep the motto of fair play. The lengths of the races were 25 meters for individual competi-

tions and for the fun relays it was either two laps or four laps. For each heat there were four to five participants competing with each other and the people who scored first took part in the final round of each category to determine the winners. The year's final results announced Hilal Hilal (WOA) winner of all four individual race winner titles while the winners of the fun relay – Egg and Spoon race were Valentina Marchei (Italy) and Hilal Hilal (WOA). The winners of the T-shirt changing relay were Hilal Hilal (WOA), Valentina Marchei (Italy), Farkas Mór Fekete (Hungary) and Jose Felix Dominguez (Argentina).

To make it more enjoyable and memorable for the participants, the coordinators performed an impromptu water ballet which came out to be fun and cherished by the participants. By the end of the Gala, all the participants took part in a group photograph/video activity around the pool to keep this event inscribed in the memory forever.

On behalf of all the coordinators who were part of the planning – Yarden Har Lev (Israel), Megan Ritch (USA), Maitreyee Banerjee (India), Kathrin Freudenberger (Germany), Laura Maria Tiidla (Estonia), Jonathan Ruwuya (Zimbabwe) – we would like to thank all the participants for their enthusiasm for making the event a grand success. Finally, we would like to thank the International Olympic Academy for giving us this amazing chance to experience this much fun in the Swimming Gala where we learnt friendship, fair play and harmony.

Torch relay in the Academy.

REPORT
ON THE POETRY AND LITERATURE WORKSHOP
by Rafael MENDOZA (MEX) and Simone CIACCIONE (ITA)

During the 59th Young Participant Session the Poetry and Literature programme was assigned two workshop sessions that took place in the evening under the luminous moon on the second level of the premises at the International Olympic Academy. This was an inspirational setting and for the first part around 20-25 participants attended.

At the beginning of the first evening, participants were introduced to Pierre de Coubertin's thoughts. They were surprised when they were told that Coubertin's idea of moral education –Olympism and the Olympic Games– had arts and sports at its core. In fact, they did not know that during the first editions of the Olympic Games there were art competitions. After the brief introduction, participants were given the "Ode to Sport" poem, written by Pierre de Coubertin under the pseudonyms of Georges Hohrod and M. Eschbach, for the 1912 Olympic Art competition in Stockholm. Participants were divided in groups and allocated two verses of the poem. The task of each group was to provide a descriptive summary of the meaning of each verse of the Ode. Participants were required to analyse the poem based on their educational and sociological background, their knowledge of sport, and Olympism. After the analysis, each group recited their verses with a dramatic performance. The poem contains words like: justice, peace, progress, which are closely related to the topic of the session.

For the second workshop session there was a smaller group of eight participants who attended and this was conducive to provide a relaxed atmosphere for everyone to share and create. At the beginning of the session, the group analysed the poem of the Olympic Anthem written by Kostis Palamas. The idea was to show the participants that the Olympic Anthem has a deeper meaning. After the analysis, we went on to the second activity that allowed the

participants to write their ideas and feelings. During the activity each participant had to come up with a short sentence. Then as a group they had one minute to write whatever came to their minds after the sentence given. At the end of the activity, participants decided to recite what they wrote after Samantha Wells –participant from Australia– suggested to write for one minute about "The People I've Met". Participants decided to put everyone's' writings together and compose one poem and presented it as a group at the Arts Happening:

The People I've Met

The people I've met are light of culture,
Beauty of life, physical spirit of friendship.

The people I've met are so diverse.
They are not only different to myself, but also within each other.
The people I've met were first strangers to me.
The people I've met mean something to me now.
The people I've met are so kind. They are funny, nice and interesting.
They are happy and tired and mad.
The people I've met mean more to me than I first thought they would.

The people I've met have stories to tell.
Stories I want to hear. Stories I want to learn from.
The people I've met are awesome, peaceful and calm.

The people I've met, without words, have told me that
I still need to get rid of all the prejudices I carry.
The people I've met make me see that there is still a long way to completely know myself.
The people I've met have shown me that I need to believe in myself.

The people I've met
Make me feel happy,
Make me feel great,
Have made me open my eyes.

The people I've met have shaped my mind in many ways I didn't expect;
In thought, in touch, in communication and respect.
I've learned things that I never thought
I would know and made bonds
Across cultures I've never encountered

There is something about this place.
Removed from the world, where nothing else exists but you.
My confidence is filled by your presence and your easy, carefree smile
I'm funny. I'm me.

Endless meetings, endless stories, endless friendship.

The people I've met share the instant connection.
You need no pre descriptive questions, but an open heart and endless discussions.
You feel belongingness, but not necessarily know the name.
You feel acceptance, although you just met them.

The people I've met are different yet the same.
We have shared together moments of joy.
And sometimes even pain.
They taught me that there's strength in unity.
They showed me that there's still hope here for you and me.
These fifteen days have taught me so much.
Especially that there's no greater feeling
Than human touch

The people I've met are amazing, loving, caring and beautiful.
The people I've met are from different places.
The people who by their mere presence change my life and make me a better person.
The people I've met are creative, supportive and motivating.
I am forever grateful for your part in my journey. It will be good if we meet again.

Simone Ciaccione (ITA)
Rafael Mendoza (MEX)
Samantha Wells (AUS)
Ghina Chahwan (LBN)
Annika Jedliczka (AUT)
Sigurd Roestad (NOR)
Jenni Sundqvist (FIN)
Mamakebe Moshoeshoe (LES)

REPORT
ON THE MUSIC AND SINGING WORKSHOP
by Sarah VÖGTLI (SUI)

On our first meeting as a group we looked into various ideas we could work on during the Session. In anticipation they were some curious faces with open minds and talents and some vocals were already vibrating in the room.

As a coordinator appointed to work with this group I was curious myself to see how this is going to develop and I wondered what we are going to end up presenting at the Arts Happening. After the first induction we have set an open stage in a room where we met every day to explore music, rhythm, sounds, voices, cultures and ideas.

Sometimes during the process there were different temperaments debating ways of working on a song or a special part of a song, or even the way a tone was to be sung. It was this dynamic and creative way of working on songs that brought a nice productive balance in the end.

It was important to consider and discuss everyone's ideas and suggestions and then decide as a group on the music we wanted to work together in order to have a nice flow otherwise the rhythm fails to be maintained, tones are sung without conviction and messages of the songs are not transmitted confidently.

Taking into account the theme of the 59th Young Participant Session on Diplomacy in the Olympic Movement and Sports, we tried to apply similar ideas in the way we worked on songs and music. Before agreeing on the actual songs, we went through a path of singing traditional songs from all over the world, songs from Opening Ceremonies of Olympic Games, popular songs easy to learn. Sometimes we did that when sitting on the marble stairs and we would let other people to join us and feel part of the group.

As a group we were also looking for a dialogue, worked with sound effects to indulge spectators in the atmosphere of the song and to link our work with the other artistic groups of poetry and dance.

At the Arts Happening we started with a French canon, creating an atmosphere of change and determination. The Lion did definitely not sleep after we sung him to sleep later on in the evening, because the jungle came to live with the effects accompanying the song and the choir. Calmness and introversion came back when "Imagine" by John Lennon followed a heart-warming poem by one of the participants of the Poetry and Literature workshop. Overall, it was astonishing to observe a group of individuals from different cultural backgrounds and histories, to come back and find one unifying voice and to promote unity and harmony among all human kind.

REPORT
ON THE DANCE WORKSHOP
by Marija LOZANČIĆ (CRO) and Xavier JEANNIN (FRA)

Dance workshop had its happening every day where more than about 20 participants were practising and having fun every day. In the end, we had about 15 dancing couples for the Arts Happening. What it was all about was sharing other cultural dances between each other. The coordinators' concept was to let other participants be a coordinator for a time while practising the dance from their culture and also being the part of the group and to dance with the participants.

We were practising Salsa, Bachata, Cha-Cha, Greek traditional folk dance, Danish traditional folk dance, Malaysian urban dance, Zumba, Waltz.

At the very end, together, we decided to dance the Waltz for the opening part of the Arts Happening then cut it with Zumba performance, round it with Bachata and finish it with traditional Greek folk dance where everyone could join and what eventually happened at the end of the event. Through the dance workshop, young participants exchanged the fun times, experience, knowledge and most importantly good intercultural communication through dances from all over the world. Five girls, where some of them were at the dance workshop too, made a choreography with other gymnasts and showed us a great mix of dance and sport, mixing gymnastics and dancing.

The social evening was richer with the performance of the young rhythmic gymnastic who mixed ribbon dance with Armenian traditional music. The whole concept of the dance workshop was to gather an equal number of participants, both male and female and to mix sport with dance and to give it some cultural background.

REPORT
ON THE ARTS PROGRAMME
FINE ART WORKSHOP AND ARTS HAPPENING

by Georgia BOUKLA (GRE)

This year I have celebrated ten years as the arts programme coordinator for the Young Participants Session and looking back to how it all started I can see all the progress and how advanced and matured the programme has become. It took me a couple of years to understand and figure out how can I adapt in best way as possible my skills and experience as an artist and an educator in a multicultural sports environment and negotiate the role of art within the Olympic education context. My focus has been on how I can facilitate an open setting for individuals who wanted to explore and give themselves the chance to explore creative thinking from an inclusive perspective and expand their understanding about art and its effectiveness in societal transformation. Daily workshops, activities and scheduled events often led by experts from the fields of music, dance, performing arts, writing, visual arts and sports gave participants the opportunity to be part of a variety of projects over the years and witness the transformative qualities of art.

Throughout history art has been described as an essential part of individual expression and the process of partaking in creating embraces an idiosyncratic approach that often breaks away from controlling elements and restrictions. Perhaps this makes art a powerful tool, one that can raise awareness on broad issues, open dialogues, share experiences and examine human relationships. Comparably the universality of sport can be thought as an effective tool that can engender change amongst individuals and communities. From this, if both art and sport do not seek to convince or persuade, but rather to demonstrate and stimulate emotions, then one can suggest that it can positively influence people's behaviour in a constructive manner, and perhaps can help to resolve complex situations between nations and states. Whilst such changes are not

always inherently positive, they have a valuable role to the divisive rhetoric of some leaders, and mediate a space for people to express and share their narrative freely.

Hence, art and sport can constantly link as both contribute to the aims, aspirations and delivery of cultural diplomacy and can help to reevaluate the conditions for change and influence of art and sport across national and international self-interested agendas.

At the same time we are surrounded by networks with constant information flow and depending on where we place ourselves as individuals we find that there are different views and though the colours of black and white may seem appealing because they are easier to recognise, in between these two colours there is a frequency of grey tones that might be more important in that they represent the unseen, the unsaid and the unspoken.

This is how conversations on "Olympic Diplomacy and Peace" went in the arts programme for the 59th Young Participants Session in Olympia. In the Fine Art workshop participants worked on two projects referencing chess games,

POP Art and the replica of Roy Lichtenstein's Greene Street Mural donated at the United States Diplomacy Centre.

The workshop programme started with a warm up activity by putting together a table black and white chess game using a book with sturdy paper punch – out illustrated template pieces.

This activity was completed by a team of coordinators and it was developed further into an experimental film with the title, Greymates. Sometimes art explains the world, some games like chess do so as well because it symbolises the parallels of power politics persisting over the centuries. The aim of the project was to transform black and white pieces into symbolic grey spaces committed to update and develop. This is how the team responded to the project:

Sport and politics have been connected for centuries. From a religious background, the Ancient Olympic Games represented since 776 BC a means to sublimate conflicts through sport-related competitions. Sport also played a central role in the nineteenth century, spreading and strengthening the power of the British Empire, the main opponent against Russia for supremacy in Central Asia. During the twentieth century, sport was often associated with fascism, apartheid and racism and interestingly also with the fight against these phenomena.

In our project, to depict the role of sport in the political diplomacy we used the metaphor of the game of chess. Played on a chequerboard with 64 squares arranged in an 8·8 grid, chess is a two-player strategy game played by millions worldwide. Born in India probably before the 7th century, chess reached Europe by the 9th century and it was standardised with its modern rules in the 19th century.

From a symbolic perspective, chess is quite cruel: as in a war game, the player's pieces are used to attack and capture the opponent's pieces, with the ultimate aim to checkmate the opponent's king by placing it under an inescapable threat of capture. One by one, the pieces lose their right to "live" being excluded from the game.

In the first phase of the Greymates project, we showed how everyone - black and white, pawns and kings - is defeated in the usual scenario. Out of this metaphor, we wanted to reveal how without communication there is no real winner, but only a sad end of exclusion, defeat and death. In the second part of our "show", all the pieces gained a new colour, the grey, in this case symbol of unity of the differences. Piece by piece everyone regained the right to

participate in the game and even the possibility to move freely inside the board discovering new and before inconceivable opportunities of expression.

Ultimately, it was our way to demonstrate the strength of diplomacy within the soft power offered by the use of sport to solve controversies. We strongly believe in the beauty of the differences and in the inherent potential within every person who decides to participate in the real game that is our life.

The project team includes coordinators Maitreyee Banerjee, Simone Ciaccioni, Richard Koo and Megan Ritch, with Georgia Boukla as supervising coordinator for Fine Arts. Allison Bourne-Vanneck produced and edited the footage showing the black and white conflict phase and the grey diplomacy/ repopulation phase.

At the same time a group of participants started working on a painting project in the style of Lichtenstein's mural using elements related to sport and chess. This was also set as a drop-in activity where everyone interested could come and contribute to the painting process. Participants learned how to work out ideas on paper before applying on to a larger scale and they used acrylic and gouache to mix bright pop art colours to create two (2.50x1.20cm) paintings on canvas.

The paintings represented peace and love and the Olympic Movement as a platform that can unite nations.

The Fine Art workshop concluded after the closing ceremony with an exhibition in the art room on the first floor at the conference building. They presented two paintings, the chess game on a high square table and the "Greymates" film. The exhibition had very positive reviews from everyone who visited the exhibition and the paintings are now a permanent display in the library and offices.

Further into the arts programme, appointed coordinators worked with participants in the dance, music and poetry workshops. The idea this year was to set some fun activities that will stimulate participants to work on performing arts routines to present at the Arts Happening. At the same time a number of participants worked independently in conversation with me in order to prepare their performances that could be added to the programme.

The event took place Saturday 14 June at 9pm and Yarden Har Lev (ISR) who was one of the coordinators who was part of the preparations for the Arts Happening provides here a close insight to the evening:

In a connection to the session's theme on "Olympic Diplomacy and Peace",

the event was opened with the Olympic Hymn which was presented by three female participants from different countries. Following this strong start, some of the highlight moments of the Arts Happening included varied dances such as Waltz, Zumba and Bachata which reflected a diversity of cultures that we have in the Olympic Movement and more importantly the power of art and sport in connecting people from all over the world without saying a word. Between the dances we had the opportunity of listening to poems and songs in the Olympic spirit which were created and performed by a group of talented participants. Among others, a famous song "Imagine" of John Lennon following a breathtaking poem "Ode to the IOA" by Ghina Chehwan (Lebanon) were the peak of the evening with a clear message of "all the people, living life in peace and sharing all the world". Another beautiful part was conducted by impressive performances of rhythmic gymnastics, acrobatics and boxing. Traditionally, the event was ended with a Greek dance to which the audience joined and turned the last performance into a mass celebration full of joy.

The Art Happening of the 59th Young Participants Session was carefully organised in a fruitful collaboration between the team of coordinators with the efficient support of the IOA staff. As a result, it was an enjoyable and an exciting experience where the participants took part as an enthusiastic team and had such a great opportunity for sharing their ideas and skills while learning from others during preparations and mainly during the practicing in the art workshops. In conclusion, this event demonstrated that young people believe

that art and sports are an integral part of Olympism able to create inspiring performance in the Olympic spirit.

To conclude, the arts programme for the 59th Young Participants Session involved between 80 and 90 people. There was a sufficient level of creative responses and outcomes in line to the topic of the session, achieved based on open communication and collaboration. Also, this year it became apparent that there was a dynamic approach towards supporting art as an important educational tool within the Olympic context. There were several discussions in connection to this in lectures and poetry workshops. The emphasis was placed on the ancient motif and Pierre de Coubertin's views on Olympic education and balanced life. Yet, while the world needs goodwill ambassadors, political support and recognition is crucial in order to tackle the realisation of such potential.

REPORT
ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET LIVE TRANSMISSION OF THE SESSION

by Yarden HAR LEV (ISR) and Fábio SILVA (POR)

Just like the Olympic Games are now consumed through the social media (in addition to the television), the IOA uses this platform in order to share its Sessions and disseminate the Olympic knowledge to others worldwide.

As has become customary, the lectures of the 59th International Session for Young Participants were livestreamed via the official IOA Sessions Website (https://www.ioa-sessions.org). In addition to the streaming, a regular activity on the IOA social media platforms, such as Facebook, tweeter and Instagram, were kept to foster a greater engagement, not only for the participants in the Session (who would often share and interact with these contents) but also to relate and connect to a larger target audience (e.g. previous participants, scholars and enthusiasts) that quite faithfully watches the Sessions' videos. Moreover, thanks to a great collaboration with the Olympic Studies Centres in Barcelona (CEO-UAB) and Cologne (GSU), the lectures of this Session were disseminated also to their Olympic community by their social media Facebook pages.

The use of social media was especially fruitful in gathering more viewers and in keeping them engaged. For such purpose, the IOA official account, IOAPA account and the coordinators' personal accounts on Facebook were used to post relevant information, updates and photos with messages of Olympism. Based on the results, we recommend that this area be further explored by the IOA, potentially through the preparation of channel specific content (for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) which can be adjusted to each Session's contents. This social media activity should be done by coordinators who are devoted to this purpose as it was this Session.

Even though considering the time-difference, a large audience was not expected, there were clear spikes for certain lectures/topics, which did not

necessarily translate into active participation in the online discussion. Through the chat box function available, the viewers were encouraged to participate in the discussion and, whenever questions were asked, the coordinators would then relay them to the lecturer, during the debate part of each lecture.

Proceeding the end of the Session, all the streamed contents are available online in the respective Session's page, where they can be consulted at any time.

A special thanks to Mr Konstantinos Karadimas for his support, availability and prompt assistance whenever any issues came up, as well as to Mr George Skouloudis for his tireless effort towards the effective streaming of this Session.

Olympic quiz within the context of the Session.

REPORT
ON THE SOCIAL EVENINGS
by Simone CIACCIONI (ITA)

At the 59th International Session for Young Participants held in the magic premises of the International Olympic Academy in Olympia, sport, artistic, cultural and social activities fascinated and absorbed for 15 unforgettable days the delegations coming from all over the world. Indeed, the Olympic motto *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (i.e., Latin for "Faster, Higher, Stronger") pertained not only to the beauty of the athletic events, but also to the excellence of cultures and traditions shared by the participants.

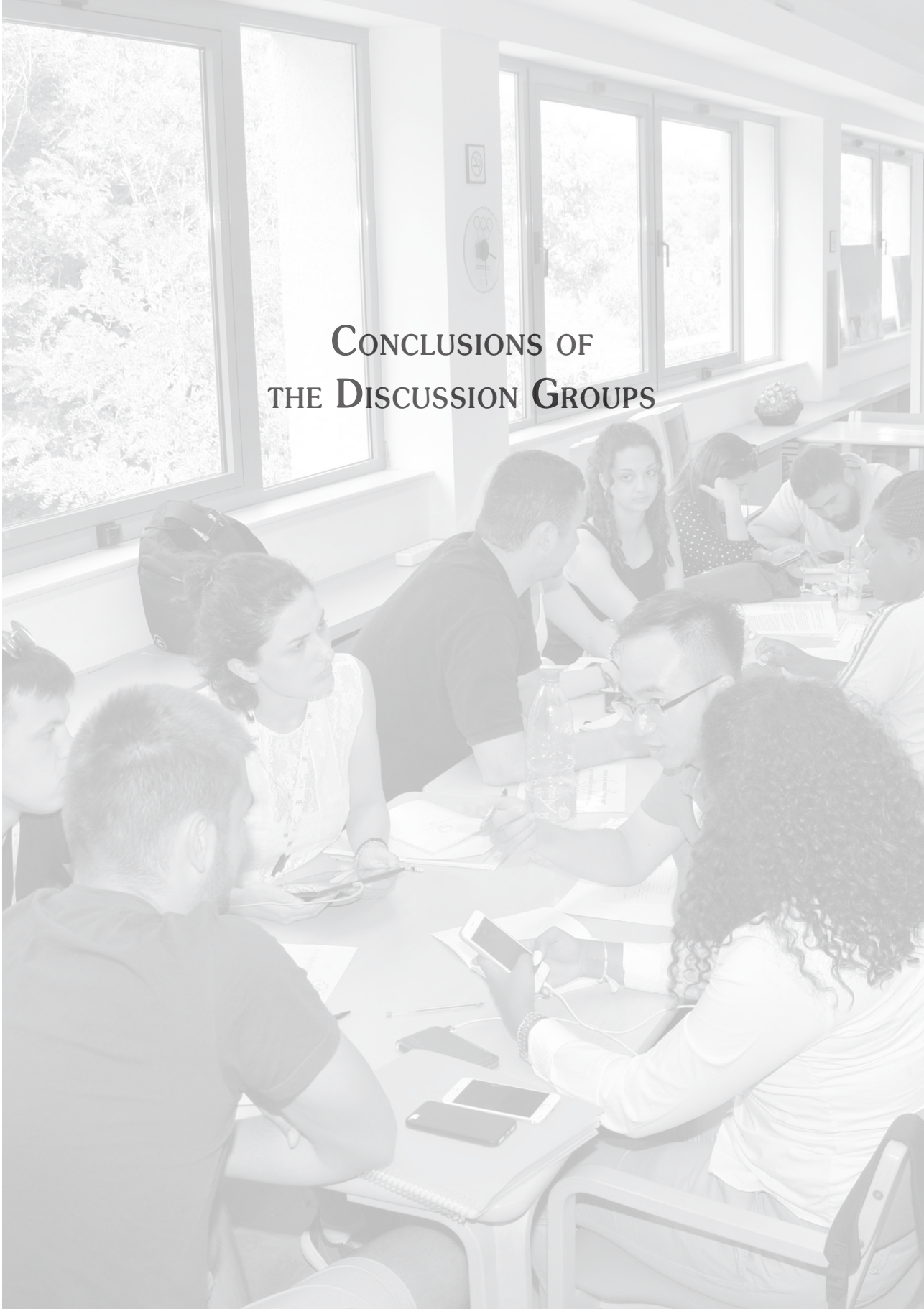
Actually, during the Social Evenings, the spirit of friendship and respect between countries was very clear, enlightening three thrilling soirée. Encompassing authentic shows, flavoursome gastronomic and drinking tasting experiences, funny games, interesting quizzes and traditional dances and songs, the presented activities amounted to 40 amazing performances. No doubt, by the many different cultures, traditions and languages, we all felt enriched dreaming together a world of peace and prosperity.

In fact, it was very interesting to enjoy a real practice of the 2019 Session theme, Olympic Diplomacy and Peace. In particular, the Social Evenings allowed the participants having a direct involvement in good international relationships. Coming from friendly or conflicting countries, the young delegates danced together, experienced "exotic" smells, tastes and sounds, leaving behind concerns and worries for some hours. For sure, the beautiful scenario of the top of the Olympic Academy's hill at dusk helped them to feel comfortable, happy and relaxed.

From both the performers on the stage and the audience sitting in the chairs, a florescence of colours and smiles bloomed in Ancient Olympia. Animating the curious spectators, the host countries demonstrated singular aspects of their cultures, sharing some facets of their amusing traditional folklore. They did not need to call for participation, since everybody wanted to hold a part in the game.

With a whirl of colourful ballets, hilarious entertainments playing on stereotypes and clichés, demonstrations of singing skills and athletic abilities, the Social Evenings represented a perfect gala promoting and exalting the beautiful national differences in a delighting atmosphere of unity and harmony.

Of course, after having acknowledged the fantastic participation of the host countries, special thanks must be addressed to all the energies that worked on the "floor" and behind the scenes to make the Social Evenings such memorable events. Our gratitude goes also to the IOA staff and all the coordinators. We all know that the 59th Session gave us extraordinary memories that will last forever in our minds and hearts.



Conclusions of the Discussion Groups

WELCOME
GROUP 4
Jonathan + Kathrin
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CYCLE A

French Speaking Discussion Group

Can sport be used to promote peace?

> *"Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. […] It is war, minus the shooting"* (George Orwell, Tribune, 1945).

Competition means competing for the same good. Initially, it can be done by any means and is not linked to any value. However, sport can be used to contribute to peace - understood as the absence of conflict between several actors, both individually and collectively. That is why an education has been developed around sport, using a universal activity to promote peaceful messages.

For the sake of our analysis, we will focus here on a global definition of education through sport. For us, this concept means the transmission of values and norms within various social contexts – whether primary (family, school, media, peer groups) or secondary (professional environment, associations, peer groups). Among the actors who initiate this education are the various national Ministries (governing education and sport), athletes (acting as ambassadors), private companies, sports associations, structured sport through federations and Olympic Committees and Academies. Undoubtedly, all these actors are involved in spreading positive values through sport. However, in its implementation, this education through sport encounters certain difficulties in terms of communication, generational collaboration and allocation of financial resources. Thus, we should try to maximise the use of education through sport to promote peace. First, we will analyse the problem, then, the existing initiatives, before finishing with proposals that could potentially be implemented.

Education through sport: meeting the daily challenges

Sport and Olympism convey many values of respect, friendship and tolerance. Over the years, sports authorities have developed educational programmes to promote them. However, some of these educational projects are not sufficiently known to all target audiences. These initiatives, whether international, national, regional or even local, have been proliferating. However, we unfortunately note that they are neither developed, nor referenced and/or promoted in all territories.

The lack of communication and promotion of these programmes is one of the main obstacles to achieving their objectives. One example is the "European Week of Sport", initiated by the European Commission, which dedicates an entire week to the promotion of sport and its values. However, some populations from EU Member States are not aware of this programme. At the national level, we can take the example of the French National Olympic and Sports Committee, which is behind many educational programmes for young people, but whose communication and promotion are not sufficiently effective for the entire French territory to take ownership of it. The second obstacle raised is a gap in the collaboration between generations. Indeed, under the constitution of sports bodies, few young people are invited to participate in their management. We believe that young people have greater availability and exceptional motivation to promote and activate educational actions at different levels. Finally, educational programmes focused on sport face another problem: the poor distribution of budget allocations.

What educational initiatives should be promoted?

Despite the problems mentioned above, actors in the field of sports have taken measures. There are many examples of reinforcing the education of young people in order to promote respect and tolerance among individuals, contributing to the establishment of a framework for peace.

The first example we chose to illustrate our comments is the implementation of three measures in Quebec to counter abuses of all kinds in sport. The Government of this province of Canada, in collaboration with the sports

community, has developed a web platform[1] that centralises all resources supporting sport stakeholders – coaches, boards of directors, athletes and/or their families - on issues related to sports ethics and integrity. This platform includes a telephone line[2] and a "virtual chat" to help any victim of abuse or intimidation. Finally, the Ambassadors of the Spirit of Sport[3] promote the values of fair play among youth and athletes. The group, composed of Patrice Bernier, Chantal Machabée, Guylaine Dumont, Jean-Luc Brassard and Karen Paquin, meets young people at school or during sports competitions to raise their awareness of the positive values of sport, fair play and ethics.

This type of initiative is also being developed in Senegal, with a complementary focus on cultural diversity. The objective is to make young Senegalese understand that there are many cultures across the country; that not one of them is superior to the others and that, on the playing field, all athletes are equal.

Communication with young people is crucial in promoting international respect, respect for individuals and each other's differences. The Olympic Week, celebrated in many countries around the world, plays this role of mediator. In Algeria, young athletes from all cities gather in the south of the country to share cultural and sporting activities that promote social, cultural and gender diversity. Young people who are passionate and convinced that the values of sport and Olympism must be shared to foster peace take ownership of this initiative. This is particularly the case in Tunisia where, as part of the Olympic university programme, it is the students who implement these awareness raising actions.

Other programmes such as the OVEP (Olympic Values Education Programme) initiated by the IOC, the Swiss Olympic "Cool and Clean" programme, the "Sport for All" programme in Rwanda and several other initiatives by national Olympic and Sports Committees and Academies, are also excellent initiatives.

Finally, several private companies develop initiatives to promote the values of Olympism, including respect through equality between men and women. This is the case of Always with its #Like AGirl promotion campaign.

1. http://www.sportbienetre.ca/
2. https://sportaide.ca/
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs

Recommendations for a better future

To ensure the continuity of these actions –and to overcome the difficulties that persist in some territories– we suggest a sharing of good practices between the different countries. It is about increasing communication –through a platform, for example– to promote programmes that work in certain countries. This also involves exchanges between young people and athletes. The aim is to make the future generation of leaders and citizens aware of the importance of the values of respect and tolerance towards each individual.

Finally, through the examples we have presented, we believe that youth engagement is essential for the development of social projects and for raising awareness of sports and Olympic values. The IOC is increasingly involving young people, through programmes such as "Young Change Makers" and "Young Reporters Programme" set up during the Youth Olympic Games. The opportunities offered to young people must remain in line with their ambitions. One of the roles of the Sports and Olympic Movement and influential stakeholders in sport is undoubtedly to continue and increase these actions.

English Speaking Discussion Group 1

Question 1: How could the International Olympic Committee empower Olympic athletes to become diplomats of the Olympic Movement?

Despite major sport events being typically perceived as mere competitions, they can play a role as a form of cultural diplomacy. They provide a platform to enable athletes, who are at the core of the Olympic Movement, to become diplomats of Olympism. Athletes have a large potential to influence people and advocate for the implementation of Olympic values amidst a wide range of global issues. Thus, their voices should be heard and they should be given the chance to use their worldwide popularity and influence in society to make positive change.

The action to be taken towards the achievement of these goals comprises several key elements. One recommendation would be the creation of workshops for athletes on the Olympic Movement, especially in the lead up to the Games. Although the focus of the athletes during games-time is their sport competition, such moment presents the opportunity for them to be ambassadors of Olympism and Olympic values. Workshops, held both at the national and international level, could be spread throughout the Olympiad. The IOC could also create a *Transfer of Knowledge Programme* that can be shared between National Olympic Committees. Such a programme would provide standardised information and guidelines on how NOCs can educate their athletes about the Olympic values by which they should live and for which they should later advocate.

Furthermore, we propose the creation of an international platform to connect and encourage athlete advocacy, and to foster its implementation through athlete interviews, social network profiles and all public appearances (e.g. school programmes).

Facilitating the networks between athletes of different countries would contribute to the breaking of stereotypes and provide a positive influence and message to people both inside their own countries and around the world.

Question 2: Can the IOC be on the front line in decreasing global democratic deficit?

The IOC plays a role through soft power in world politics, yet it is run as a sport organisation, meaning that it has the power but lacks some structural elements to give it its legitimacy. It could be on the front line to decrease the global democratic deficit since the sports community is spread worldwide – 206 member states in the IOC versus 193 for the United Nations. Therefore, enabling the youth population to participate in the IOC decision-making process could increase the organisation's effectiveness.

Indeed, the IOC has come a long way in terms of youth representation, increasing the number of Young Change Makers in its commissions from seven YCMs in 2018 to 16 in 2019. However, this positive initiative should remain a top priority in the future. Hence, our proposal is to upgrade the status of young people within the organisation from advisors to members who can play a role in decision-making. The Kazan Action Plan, adopted in 2017, places the role of young people within the core of good governance and at the heart of sport. Therefore, we encourage the IOC to take upon minimum quotas for the number of youth participants on its Commissions.

Presently, youth make up the majority of the world's population. The UN and the IOC could therefore work hand in hand, especially when it comes to the youth agenda. For instance, the UNSC Resolution 2250 on Youth Peace and Security could be closely connected with the Olympic Truce, which aims at ensuring a safe environment during the Games. Additionally, the above-mentioned resolution recognises for the first time in history that young people are positive agents of change, rather than passive victims and at risk for stability. Given the fact that the UN Office for Sports Development and Peace was closed in 2017, the youth initiative could enhance the cooperation between the IOC and the UN.

English Speaking Discussion Group 2

Question 1: How can we teach Olympic values to children to ensure that they put them into practice not only in sport but in life?

Ever since Pierre de Coubertin pioneered the Olympic Movement in 1894, the values of friendship, respect, and excellence have been at the heart of its mission. These values, when put into practice, are meant to not only encourage athletic competition, but to also inspire cooperation, tolerance, and unity between cultures. In today's world these underlying values are often forgotten as racism, nationalism and violence persist worldwide. One approach to ensuring a brighter future is to have a more robust focus on teaching Olympism to children by adding it to school curricula and coaching certification programmes, as well as offering educational seminars at athletic competitions. With these initiatives, youth will learn valuable attitudes and behaviours through sport, but not only for sport.

Children spend up to eight hours a day in school. Therefore, adding Olympism to the curriculum would ensure that large populations are exposed to Olympic values. For example, Olympism can be covered in physical education courses or health and wellness curricula. It should include not only theoretical but also practical applications of the Olympic values of friendship, respect, and excellence. This modification of educational programming will reach not only athletes but also other students who may not have otherwise participated in sport. It may be a challenge to implement entire programmes focused on Olympism in schools, but every little bit will help.

Another way to infuse Olympism early in childhood is to integrate Olympic education into coaching certification programmes. Although requirements vary by country, most nations require athletic coaches to complete some type of formal physical education certification. Instead of merely learning how to coach

the technical aspects of the sport, they should also be educated on promoting Olympic values to their athletes and putting them into practice.

Lastly, youth athletic competitions are the best place to reach a wide audience of young athletes. Therefore, adding an educational seminar on fair play, friendship, and cooperation would be an effective way to teach Olympism to children. This can be implemented at either national or international tournaments in order to have a positive effect on youth.

The application of the above ideas will depend on individual governments and educational systems, but there are many options of how to instil Olympism in our children using sport as a vehicle. The more touchpoints youth can have with Olympic values, the better. The fruits of this labour may not be seen in the short term but will, instead, build a solid foundation for a more sustainable, collaborative, and diplomatic society in the future.

Question 2: How can we use the media to strengthen the link between Olympism and the Olympic Games?

With the help of media and other stakeholders, the Olympic Games have evolved since its first edition, in 1896, to become the world's most influential international event. However, the majority of the media coverage surrounding the Olympics has been focused on winning medals and prize money and has moved away from showcasing the true values of Olympism. As the media is the most efficient and powerful tool of communication to a wide audience, it can be used to spread Olympic ideals to the masses and connect people from all around the world. This will inherently have a positive impact on international relations.

In the modern world where racism and intolerance still persist, it is important to showcase athletes from different countries during Olympic coverage and tell the stories of their Olympic journeys. This will help people have a more global perspective on the Olympics instead of solely focusing on their own country, which will encourage friendliness and acceptance of other cultures.

In order to further spread the lessons of Olympism through digital media, the International Olympic Committee and/or National Olympic Committees can host social media competitions. For example, people would be challenged to share a photo of how they practice Olympic values in their own life for a chance

to win a trip to the upcoming Games or an autographed jersey from a famous athlete. This will help community engagement and get people excited about the values from which the Olympic Games were born. Viral videos are another great way to relay a message like anti-doping or anti-racism to a wide audience.

Unfortunately, some nations still use media during the Olympics as a way to spread nationalism and propaganda in a negative way in order to sway people's opinion about certain governments. While we cannot control how individual countries broadcast the Olympics, we can try to change the overall media message by weaving Olympic values into the IOC's promotion of the Games and encouraging advertisers to do the same.

Technology and digital/social media are now a vital part of our global society and we should capitalise on its ability to disseminate information and engage a wide audience in the promotion of Olympic ideals. The goal is to expand the conversation about the importance of these values, because only if we practice them as a society can we improve relations between people and nations.

English Speaking Discussion Group 3

Question 1: How do we extend the Olympic Truce and its brand to include both competition and education?

In order to reach a broader audience and go beyond the Olympic Games, the group proposes a set of initiatives that will be presented in groups and relevance. The relevance takes into account the broadness of the initiatives and the groups divided by theme.

Media: Increase the advertising and media presence of Olympic social media as well as the PR communication.

We propose to create a partnership between Olympic Channel and streaming platforms (e.g.: Netflix, HBO Go, Hulu, etc.) in order to have their content accessible and recognisable to more people. This would include exclusive content (movies, series and documentaries) related with the Olympics, introducing topics such as Olympic education and Olympic Truce.

Education: We suggest opening the International Olympic Academy's (IOA) Young Participants Session to leaders of youth party wings, journalists' students, governmental employees in the sports industry, etc. These individuals will be the future leaders of the sport sector. By that time, they will remember what they learned and explored in IOA and their decisions and work will ultimately be influenced by these insights.

The creation of a Universal Olympic Education Programme to be implemented by all National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and National Olympic Academies (NOAs) in schools, sports clubs and training camps, ensuring that the same content and goals are taught and spread all over the world the same way. This would guarantee that not only a common curriculum is set but also promote the connection between NOCs and NOAs to share and improve the implementation of this programme.

Promote a worldwide Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP)

debate (for example, Sri Lanka) about the Olympic Truce, values and Movement. Every country would organise its own debate and the winning team goes to represent the country in the final held at the host city of the Olympic Games. In order to reach a larger audience, the teams would be formed by people from different ages, backgrounds and regions, in order to have a diverse group that could later spread the experience and motivate other people to learn more about the Olympics, as well as to participate in similar future initiatives.

Promotion: Creation of a Fair-Play prize to be awarded to the athletes, coaches and referees that promote the Olympic values the best during the Olympic Games.

Question 2: How can athletes be part of the Olympic diplomacy process?

What is Olympic diplomacy?

Olympic diplomacy is a soft power, preserving the Olympic values of friendship, respect and excellence when there are challenges within the international sport context.

Athletes can be involved in Olympic diplomacy by educating other athletes in their country.

Each NOC should require Olympians to share their experiences with younger athletes. This can be integrated in the Universal Olympic Education Programme, as mentioned earlier. For this to be impactful there should be updates, perhaps monthly or quarterly. These updates can be rotated among each sport and done within the first three years after the Olympic Games and once before a new one. For accountability, each NOC should submit to the IOC a brief written update with a picture or video of this dialogue.

Olympians can share personal messages of Olympic diplomacy and Olympism.

Olympians can write about their views on Olympic diplomacy and Olympism and include a picture or video of this dialogue. The IOC can create a platform to share these messages on their website and social media. By doing this, they are growing Olympic diplomacy and the Olympic brand, and they are also promoting the brands of athletes and their countries.

Olympic athletes or prominent athletes in their sport can give workshops on Olympic diplomacy and Olympism to other athletes.

The strategy and idea behind this is to create partnerships with athletes who have large followings. These are the major influencers in sport and have a great potential in connecting with other athletes and educating them. We feel coaches also should attend these workshops, and at times join the athletes in talking about Olympic diplomacy and Olympism. Including coaches is important because they are the leaders for athletes in their countries.

Media

The IOC should create a process for photographers to share their work on Olympic diplomacy. For example, there could be an easy and accessible folder to upload pictures and submit their name, country, and credentials which should be available for all approved media. As mentioned, worldwide education is integral to truly have a global impact. Online streaming platforms would be significant to show a partnership between those entities and the IOC to promote Olympism and Olympic diplomacy.

Lastly – Olympic diplomacy is us. We have the power at our fingertips to show and inspire our personal networks and countries of how Olympism and sports can change the world.

English Speaking Discussion Group 4

Question 1: Does Olympism promote peace around the world?

"By throwing a bridge over continents, by standing above differences of race, social regime or political system, [the Olympic Movement] can bring hope and togetherness so often and so deeply torn apart", said the former International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge, who chairs the Olympic Truce Foundation.

The power of Olympism to promote peace around the world is a concept that has been discussed throughout history. As defined by the Olympic Charter of the IOC, Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will, and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life, based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of a good example and respect for universally recognised fundamental principles of ethics. The ability for sport to promote peace around the world and transpire outside of the metaphorical playing lines has been proven with countless examples throughout history.

A clear example of how Olympic values can transcend society is Jesse Owens, an African-American athlete who won four medals at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. Under the gaze of the Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler, who expected the triumph of Germany, Owens was befriended by rivalling German long jumper Luz Long, who had been instructed to beat Owens at all costs. Despite defeating Long for the Olympic gold medal, their unorthodox friendship was a bond that both athletes cherished for the rest of their lives. The ability for Owens and Long to recognise the humanity in each other is an act that gives inspiration to our society for over 80 years.

Another representation of Olympism promoting peace around the world comes from 2017. Despite much political conflict between the two governments of Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Israeli judo athletes were allowed to

compete in Abu Dhabi for the first time in recent history. Team Israel went on to win several medals, including one gold by Tal Flicker in the 66kg weight category. Unfortunately, the Israeli national anthem was not played, so Flicker sang it himself to the tune of the International Judo Federation anthem. Although this may not be viewed as a complete success, progress was achieved.

Lastly, a very famous example comes from Nelson Mandela, the former president of the South African Republic. Mandela had a tall task of uniting the white and black community in his country and he utilised Olympism and sport to do so. During the 1995 Rugby World Cup, Mandela urged Captain Francois Pienaar to utilise a black player on his team. This encouraged black South Africans to cheer for their team, despite not commonly doing so during that time. The South Africans went on to defeat the All-Blacks in a historic upset, which finished with the crowd chanting "One Country as South Africa".

From Luz Long to the Middle East to Nelson Mandela, we are constantly reminded of the power of Olympism and its ability to promote peace around the world and build bridges across all aspects of life. As we move forward as a society, it is essential we recognise this strength and continue to value its benefits in our world.

Question 2: How can the International Olympic Committee utilise Olympism to positively impact society outside of sport?

Olympism is a concept which dates back to Ancient Greece and is still practiced widely in sport today. Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of role models and respect for universally accepted fundamental principles of ethics. It is also a practice with the ability to positively impact society in all other aspects of life. Through education, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has the unique opportunity to utilise Olympism for the future of humanity.

It is important that we introduce all children, not just athletes, to the Olympic values. This introduction can begin as early as primary school through practice and incorporation of these values into their daily lives. This way, as they get older, whether they become athletes or not, they would have the knowledge of these vital values and become modelled citizens of society and pass on what they know to the generations to come.

This can be achieved by instituting National Olympic Academies around the world, similar to the Korean model, which was started in 1988 and is held annually by the Korean Olympic Committee. The idea is to promote the values of Olympism among Koreans. Most participants are people who major in physical education or work at national sport federations. Of course, it is good for the Olympic Academies to participate in sport, but in order to popularize the Olympic spirit the Academies should be instructed and promoted so that those who are active in other fields could also participate. All coaches, teachers and adults responsible for developing the youth of our world should be included.

Another platform for the utilisation of Olympism to positively impact society is the Olympic Channel. The Olympic Channel is a global digital broadcast channel, which reports the stories of Olympic Games and athletes. The IOC should recruit athlete ambassadors from countries around the world to create programming for children, teaching them the values of Olympism. Athletes are already role models for children, so this gives a positive outlet and a highly effective way of taking advantage of an already established mode of communication.

The IOC has a great opportunity to serve as a catalyst for the development of the next generation. It is the challenge of the Olympic world to steer through education to help the youth live out the values associated with the five rings. This can be achieved through the introduction of Olympic Academies in each country to promote the values to our influencers and then by incorporating our present athlete role models to inspire the future.

English Speaking Discussion Group 5

Question 1: Where are the diplomatic lines between sports and politics and who defines them?

As diverse members of the sport community, we believe there is a need to define the different diplomatic lines in politics and sports. Moreover, politicians tend to control the resources and their distributions in a community which indicates the amount of influence politics could potentially have in different sectors, as economy, finance, trade and sports.

There are various actors that play a critical role in defining the diplomatic lines between sports and politics – we can call this group an "ecosystem". The main actors that make up this ecosystem are: media; sponsors, businesses and corporations; politicians and governments; athletes; fans and audience.

For example, "Media" and "Politicians and Governments" are further explained below from the athletes' point of view:

- Media: Media plays a vital role in passing a message to overlapping communities; it can influence an audience by creating a positive message. This will allow for the audience to think about the philosophies of sport and Olympism. However, media can also leave a negative impact on an audience wherein positive intentions could be changed in just seconds. By focusing on the small, irrelevant issues for their own agenda, the media can damage the hard work, reputation and the dedication that the athletes have put into their craft.
- Politicians and Governments: More often than not, politicians' main objectives are being in power and getting majority votes. Hence, they end up working for their own interest or for the interest of the council or the political party that they represent rather than the public. Nonetheless, there are cases where politicians work for the benefit of the people by giving more opportunities for athletes to thrive and for sport to progress and develop.

Sport cannot function on its own accord. It needs the aforementioned "ecosystem" in order to produce positive results. Each actor within the ecosystem may have their own agenda, and thus, impose their own agenda onto its respective audience. Perhaps this is why there needs to be clearly defined diplomatic lines.

Question 2: How can the International Olympic Committee enable and encourage their TOP Partners to reinforce their role in promoting peace through sports?

Currently the role of TOP Partners is focused on global marketing and promotion of their Olympic Games sponsorship. We believe that by utilising the TOP Partners, we can evolve their roles to incorporate the promotion of peace globally through Olympism education. Currently, there is a lack of understanding about what Olympism is, and the critical role it plays in promoting peace. This needs to change as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) plays a significant role, using its soft power, in promoting peace throughout the world. Hence, involving the TOP partners could magnify its contribution.

TOP Partners sponsor the Olympic Games because of their alignment and passion towards the values of Olympism. We believe that this can be further utilised to promote peace through knowledge of Olympism as a philosophy of life which places sport at the service of mankind. The IOC Television and Marketing Services (TMS) should introduce along with the TOP Partners a learning toolkit of Olympism values integrated with the corporate values, which can be disseminated into the Partners' organisation and users of the brands. This promotion of Olympism internally will have a ripple effect by word of mouth, and if these values are placed on the Visa cards for example, it would be an opportunity to spread Olympism worldwide among different stakeholders of societies. This can be the first step of a long-term process which leads for reaching a comprehensive understanding at the end.

In addition, by utilising value-in-kind opportunities, the IOC can evolve these learning toolkits to both educate and inspire partners and societies. The goal, which could be contractually foreseen, is for partners to create and promote Olympism worldwide through such campaigns. Ultimately, this could establish a significant contribution to world peace knowledge.

We believe there is an opportunity to have Intel, for example, create a type of virtual reality experience that other partners could use to educate and train their staff – a sort of Olympic experience which educates and inspires company employees. The idea being that this new-found knowledge will inspire future peace related projects within the company.

English Speaking Discussion Group 6

Question 1: How can sport be used as a tool to include immigrant minorities into society?

Around the world nations are attempting to deal with influxes of immigrants, both legal and illegal. It is important to firstly identify how these feelings of separation can be addressed before discussing the sport context. A high-level investigation[1] can uncover that providing effective safety and security, removing administrative hurdles that leave immigrants in limbo without the ability to create their own purpose and goals, or addressing specific needs of the individuals and their families are the first steps that must be taken. Sport can address these specific needs in the following ways:

- Networking opportunities. Sport's wide reach allows immigrants/athletes to be introduced to people they may otherwise never have spoken to.
- Stereotypes. Sport clubs are the opportunity for negative stereotypes to be dispelled. An early start in life to witnessing and working with different ethnic groups will set the children up for a future of increased cultural diversity.
- Belonging. Sport allows immigrants to belong to the larger cultural group either as athletes or supporters.

An interview[2] with a member of the sport community is used here to analyse the strength of this report's suggestions. This is a real story with the information changed to protect individual privacy. Franz is a volleyball coach who met some new immigrants on the streets playing sports among themselves. They were all friendly people and Franz offered to coach them alongside other natives. They informed Franz that they would not be able to pay coaching or team fees. Franz relayed this information to his superiors and was told that the club/federation did

1. The Integration of Immigrants into American Society, National Academies Press. 2015.
2. Interview, 59th International Session for Young Participants, IOA, 2019.

not want the legal or financial responsibilities. Franz could coach them, but it would need to be after he has completed his other coaching responsibilities and he would not be paid for his time. Any legal or financial requirements would be solely on his shoulders. This real-world example highlights a common theme; newcomers to a country are willing to engage in organised sport but if a local community is not willing to take on some additional financial or legal responsibilities there will be missed opportunities for social inclusion. In this example, an opportunity to bring the new immigrants into the local sporting family, away from street play and the associated dangers of always being on the streets was missed. It is this report's position that improved economic, regulatory and communication strategies from sport administrators is needed to leverage the power sport has at social inclusion. Economic support from parent institutions IOC, NOCs, international/ national sport federations, EU and governments will help local clubs implement the desired changes. Administrative support to newcomers and helping them gather the necessary paperwork to participate. Also, a regulatory framework implemented by parent institutions mandating minimum standards and ethical duties to all participants in sport. Lastly a communication strategy executed by parent institutions and local clubs on the value of including the newcomers to their sport[3] is the final point in our suggested three-pronged approach to using sport as a tool for the social inclusion of new immigrants to a country.

Question 2: Are Olympians used as chess pieces in global sport?

In the world of international sport, it often seems that the end justifies the means. In this case the "end" represents the ever-growing commercial strength behind the Olympic rings and the subsequent political and social goals nation states associate with the Olympics. As a result, the "means", which is the welfare of the athletes at the centre of the Games, is a secondary consideration.

There are countless examples that illustrate this phenomenon of exploitation of athletes for political or commercial goals, while compromising athletes and their health in the process. One of the most prominent examples is state-sponsored doping programmes, with the aim of demonstrating the power and superiority of these countries to the rest of the world. The government-sponsored doping of Russian

3. "We all play for Canada" advertisement.

athletes in Sochi 2014 is one example that demonstrates that even today athletes' health is being sacrificed for the greater political goal of their country. The greater goal for which athletes are used for is often commercial. In the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympics the Ski Cross course was extraordinarily dangerous. This made watching the Games more exciting and thus more commercially lucrative (more viewers = more commercial exposure for sponsors), but it also resulted in injuries of ~20% of participating athletes. The use of athletes for political and commercial ends is part of the reality of the Olympics and athletes are often rewarded for their sacrifice with money and fame. This report's position is that there is a pact between states and athletes in which both sides gain. However, often athletes are either not aware of their role as pawns in the hands of their governments or are not appropriately compensated for the sacrifices they make for the benefit of their countries' greater goal. Thus, we believe that a protection mechanism should be put in place. These processes will ensure that the sacrifice of athletes is at a minimum during their athletic careers, and that they are compensated for their contributions during and after their retirement. To borrow from the game of chess, the aim of these protection mechanisms is to minimise the number of pawns lost and to acknowledge their sacrifice. We suggest a few practical ideas to promote the protection of athletes: Contractual agreements between athletes and administrators or athletes and partners should be written collaboratively. Athlete involvement in decision making via commissions and governance training is essential to ensuring the decision-making process is balanced. Athlete leaders, medallists with large followings and a large media impact being involved with sport governance and athlete rights. Retirement programmes to help athletes overcome the academic and vocational sacrifices they made during their athletic careers. It is this report's position that the current model of Olympic Games produces winners and losers. The winners are nation states and commercial giants while the losers are most often the *average* athlete. There are ways that the balance between athlete welfare and other objectives can be managed to promote win-win situations. Protection mechanisms during an athlete's competitive phase and after, leveraging athlete leaders and administrators are all effective methods when used together. In the chess game that is the global sport movement, who plays the role of pawns and queens may change but nation states remain the kings. This is the practical reality and this report provides practical solutions for this reality. However, the deeper question is whether nation states should be kings, or can this game be changed in the future?

English Speaking Discussion Group 7

Question 1: How can the values of Olympism be implemented in conflict zones to promote diplomacy and peace?

The goal of Olympism is to build relationships and foster friendship between communities and nations, and to help them live in harmony and peace. By implementing the core values of Olympism within conflict zones, we can achieve and retain the spirit of solidarity between communities and nations. The example of the joint march of North and South Korea demonstrates how these important values are applied to enhance diplomacy and peace between two countries. We believe Olympism can build a platform for dialogue among nations, play a peace-building role on Olympians, and highlight the significance of Olympic education to foster peace.

- Sport creates a platform for dialogue free from political influences and indifferences. Sport can be used as a tool for reconciliation, acting as a diplomatic means to engage in open conversations. For example, the use of ping pong diplomacy between China and the United States of America was one of the most effective diplomatic uses of sport fostering diplomatic relations between two nations.
- Engagement of Olympians could be an effective tool in enabling progressive, diplomatic discussions and has the potential to create peaceful and prosperous communities. Athletes can serve as ambassadors and role models to influence and create an image that promotes the values of Olympism and reassures the young generations. By appointing sportsmen as public figures they can inspire a young generation in a positive way, for instance, Kirsty Coventry from Zimbabwe, Olympian and most decorated Olympian from Africa, has been appointed as a cabinet Minister for Sports, Youth, and Recreation.
- It is a necessity for young generations to be educated about the Olympic

values and to do so, the philosophy of Olympism needs to be incorporated in education through school curriculums and exchange programmes that are used to reinforce mutual ties and cultural bonds between countries and athletes (e.g. Gallini World Cup under 15 international world cup which was organised as a cultural and sport action programme).

In conclusion, sport has the potential to play various roles that impact communities in ways that have social, cultural and educational significance and brings people together whether it is during peace or conflict periods. The idea of enabling dialogue to initiate the peace process between nations underlies this phenomenon. Nonetheless, the empowerment of athletes (particularly Olympians) with diplomatic roles can help strengthen the promotion of peace and diplomacy as well. It is also essential to pass onto the young generations with the appropriate Olympic education toolkits in order for the Olympic values to live on and maintain its peace-influencing ability.

> *Sports build good habits, confidence and discipline. They make players into community leaders and teach them how to strive for a goal, handle mistakes and cherish growth opportunities.*
>
> Julie Foudy.

Question 2: How can Olympism better promote Peace in society through social media?

The emergence of social media has significantly impacted the way in which we view sport. For many people, social media is now part of their everyday lives. It is now of utmost importance for our athletes, National Olympic Committees (NOCs), Commission Members and National Federations to understand the value and information that may be conveyed through social media and the subsequent messages which are portrayed to the public. Effective use of social media as a soft-power can greatly influence the public's perception and resonance with peace and the Olympic Movement. Social media is an effective and efficient mode to communicate messages of Olympism to a wide audience of customers, supporters, and the public.

> *Social media can provide a conversational extension to sports. It gives us the opportunity to humanise our communications*

and make our messages more approachable and relevant to our supporters.

Stephen Jones, CEO Dallas Cowboys

Our group's recommendation is three-fold and suggests the International Olympic Committee note the following:

National Olympic Committees

A message is better heard and communicated where there are several people or organisations communicating a similar intent. The IOC should be looking to develop guidelines and educating members of NOCs to better promote Olympism through their social media outlets. This is not to control the messages being sent, as authentic promotion and engagement is key for social media to work, but to encourage a deeper meaning of Olympism to be shared by people who are relevant in that country. Olympians can make use of social media platforms by sharing their stories about the Olympic values and regularly engage with fans and influence the wider public. These ideas could also be advanced universally where cross-promotion and cooperation by several athletes / NOCs could showcase the friendship and peace we must hold as a global society across countries.

Digital Tools

There are new and exciting ways in which organisations and people are engaging with one another. It is essential for the IOC to continue to develop innovative ways in which it may talk to the public. One suggestion is the facilitation of regular podcasts by Olympic Ambassadors speaking of relevant sporting issues or activities that could develop a following. Content also needs to be relevant and up-to-date. Gone are the days of people spending time to read lengthy articles, information must be displayed in interactive graphics and posts. The Olympic Movement must make use of videos and images like that which can be accessed on the Olympic Channel.

Commercial Communication

Many NOCs lack the necessary funding to be able to implement full-scale and engaging social media programmes. Using commercial sponsors and

advertisements to emphasise the spirit of Olympism will ensure content which reaches wide, is eye-catching and encourages peaceful conduct of their audiences. The IOC must encourage the group of The Olympic Partners to develop worldwide activities and initiatives, which run alongside the Olympic rings to encourage active participation from their audience and increase the overall Olympic following.

In conclusion, social media is a great way to distribute information to a wide audience and range of people. We now live in a digital age which is evolving quickly, and it is vital for the IOC to move ahead of these times. We feel that National Olympic Committees' social media programmes are currently under-utilised and could be used as an effective tool for the IOC to better spread the values of Olympism and peace. The NOCs should be educated and develop broad social media plans which encompass all audiences and help spread Olympism. It is a cost-effective and easy solution to communicate the Olympic values and how these are being implemented in countries around the world. Along with this, attractive and interactive ways to convey information to their audience must be sought along with the regular use of social media platforms to ensure the correct messages are being adopted by local media.

Enhancing the range of accessible digital tools will encourage the public to connect. As heard in many aspects of Olympism, it is this connection which is at the soul of world peace. The aim of any social media programme must be aimed to increase the engagement and then the overall connection of those engaged.

English Speaking Discussion Group 8

Question 1: How can the International Olympic Committee be more effective in promoting peace?

One of the main goals of Olympism is to "place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view of promoting a peaceful society" (Olympic Charter, p. 13). Peace has always been one of the prime goals of the International Olympic Committee, and the organisation has realised success in this regard. The IOC's contribution in fostering rapprochement between North and South Korea is a plausible example. However, there are situations in which the IOC has failed to effectively handle tragic situations associated with international relations.

When Russia and Georgia went to war prior to the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, in violation of the Olympic Truce, the IOC did not react adequately to preserve the Olympic Truce. We believe that the IOC has a positive influence in international relations through sports diplomacy in their quest to promote peace. They can do so by utilising both the strong and soft measures they have at hand. We assume that the IOC affirms not to be a political actor for one reason, to back off political pressure. But this does not mean the IOC cannot pressure political interests to achieve peace. We understand the IOC has assets with great value that cannot be bought or sold, like the brand of peace and integrity, the athletes, and the rest of the sports community, which can unite more than any country or religion can.

We believe that the IOC should take a stronger stance when its values are violated. Currently, the IOC selects when to react or not. It is acting strongly when governments interfere with the autonomy of National Olympic Committees (NOCs) but do little when states go to war at the time when the Olympic Truce is declared. In order to preserve peace and promote it more effectively, similar measures such as the suspension of the NOCs and allowing

athletes to compete under the Olympic flag could be made, after adequate amendments are included in the Olympic Charter.

The IOC can also implement soft measures by utilising the powerful voices of Olympic athletes by sharing peace messages, education and activations within the Olympic village. Wristbands symbolising an Olympic peace movement could be shared at a stand within the village during Games' time and social media activations like hashtags could also be created by the IOC to be shared with athletes, who in turn can share these with their significant global followers. The Olympics are a great time to launch it as the globe stops and watches.

In conclusion, we believe that concerning the assets the IOC has at its disposal; it can be more effective in promoting world peace, by introducing some of our recommendations.

Question 2: How can Olympic diplomacy contribute to host cities' ability to positively influence environmental issues?

In ancient Olympia, the rivers here, Alpheios and Kladeos were represented as gods in the temple of Zeus. Respect for the natural environment was embodied in Ancient Greek culture thus the cosmos was described as "a whole and complete so the emphasis in trying understand was on the connections among humanity, the natural environment and the spirit of realm" (Reid & Moore, 2017).

"Sports diplomacy is the practice which is facilitated by traditional diplomacy and uses sports people and sporting events to engage, inform and create a favourable image among foreign publics and organisations, to shape their perceptions in a way that is (more) conducive to the sending government's foreign policy goals" (Murray, 2011). Thereby Olympic diplomacy (OD) can play a huge role in educating people about sustainability and how to deal with the environmental changes and prevent current and future diplomatic issues. For example, the huge numbers of refugees who can lose their homes to either heat or flood.

As an example, we can look at the ongoing "Olympic Culture and Education Programme" (OCEP) organised by the National Olympic Committee of Azerbaijan. In the framework of the programme, workshops and seminars have been held to promote the principles and values of Olympism to students.

Through the programme participants learned how to contribute to building a peaceful and better world devoid of discrimination within the Olympic spirit, as well as, respecting fundamental environmental principles. At the end of the workshop, participants are tasked with combating environmental issues that were raised during the hosting of the Olympic Games (OG) such as deforestation (Sochi 2014), air pollution (Beijing 2008), water pollution (Rio 2016) and more (OCEP, 2019).

The International Olympic Committee can give positive impact to the host cities by educating the athletes during OG. The "One Medal, One Tree" initiative implemented during the 2017 South East Asian (SEA) Games in Kuala Lumpur entailed giving saplings to all medallists for them to plant trees along the Malaysia Central Forest Spine peninsula (New Straits Times, 2017). The idea was born out of the concern to reduce carbon emissions caused by the SEA Games. The other goal was to increase public awareness on the importance of forest rehabilitation for biodiversity conservation. The knowledge acquired by athletes through sport and sustainability initiatives can be implemented in their local societies. This can be done by creating garden projects within their communities.

In conclusion, OD can be a tool to raise awareness and contribute, together with host cities, to tackling environmental issues. Through athlete education and ensuring sustainable games, sports institutions can inspire and positively influence the society to make a change.

English Speaking Discussion Group 9

Question 1: How can the International Olympic Committee defy the temporal nature of the Olympic Truce to create a legacy that extends beyond Olympic Games?

The Olympic Truce is an ancient tradition that grants participants and spectators safe passage to and from the Olympic Games. Beginning seven days before the start of the Olympic Games, and continuing for seven days after, the truce ensures that the games are underpinned by the Olympic ideals of peace, friendship and understanding. Throughout history, the Olympic Truce has provided opportunities for all nations, particularly those in conflict, to engage in international diplomacy efforts, and has set the stage for the initiation of peace-making efforts.

To defy the temporal nature of the Olympic Truce to create a legacy that extends beyond the Olympic Games, we propose two synergetic measures; the development of a comprehensive education programme around the Olympic Movement that is funded by the proceeds of a "Super League" event series based on Olympic sports.

We propose a Super League event series to be an International Olympic Committee (IOC) supported event that is established within current Olympic sports. The event would be modelled on the concept used in the International Swimming League's team-based competition format*. Through this new sporting event, the opportunity for multinational, mixed gender, teams to compete in Olympic sports, at events run between Olympic Games (Summer/ Winter) would be developed.

This type of event can be used as a vehicle to promote the principles of the Olympic Truce by harnessing the nature and spirit of a multicultural, mixed gender team. This model would allow nations to continue to foster diplomatic efforts made during the period of Olympic Truce each quadrennial.

Both current and potential Olympic sponsors should be involved in the funding of these events. The benefits of this opportunity for sponsors of these events can be seen threefold:

- These events can serve as a stepping stone for potential sponsors of the Olympic Games to trial the mega sporting event sponsorship role in collaboration with the IOC and National Olympic Committees.
- These events would also provide additional exposure opportunities for existing Olympic sponsors.
- Sponsors can be aligned with the creation and delivery of a comprehensive education programme that promotes the values of the Olympic Movement.

This proposed educational programme would receive funding through the proceeds of the super league events and developed in conjunction with the Olympic Truce Centre. The educational programme would embody the Olympic values of friendship, respect and excellence and be presented at all levels of sporting and educational structures.

The Olympic Truce is just as relevant in our modern day as it was in Ancient Greece. The development of this super league event, and its funding of an educational programme, has the potential to defy the temporal nature of the Olympic Truce to create a legacy that extends beyond the Olympic Games.

Question 2: How can the function of Olympic athletes in the Olympic Movement be expanded to be players in International diplomacy and peace?

Despite athletes embodying the role of a diplomat on the sporting field, the current structure of the Olympic Movement does not allow for full recognition of an athlete's role in international diplomacy and peace outside of the sporting field. It is our belief that athletes have the potential to play a crucial role in diplomacy through the nature of their influence on the responsibility in the communication, representation, and negotiation of their nation.

The current role of an athlete within the Olympic structure is limited by the colloquially known *"Olympic Silence"*, which restricts an athlete's ability to express themselves freely on the Olympic stage by some NOCs; impeding on the universal human right to the freedom of expression.

Understanding that there are economic and political obligations that may restrict the renegotiation of this ruling, we believe that a reinvigoration of the cultural programming of the Olympic Movement to include more opportunities for athletes to share their opinions and beliefs through creative and artistic mediums, would in part, liberate their freedom of expression and demonstrate the social role of an athlete in international diplomacy and peace.

While cultural activities are available within the context of each Olympic Games, it has been noted that communication and awareness of artistic and cultural happenings within the Olympic setting are lacking. For athletes to demonstrate their opinions and to be seen as players in diplomacy, it is essential that the artistic and cultural programmes are more visible and accessible.

We recommend the inclusion of creative space within the Olympic Park for athletes to share their opinions, thoughts, and beliefs as well as the challenges they face, through the medium of performance, arts and culture. Further, with video streaming continuing to be an effective communication platform, we recommend that the Olympic Channel promote these artistic happenings to the global community; connecting the cultural side of an athlete with the world.

Not only will this concept build the reputation of an athlete as more than just a sports person, but this may also prove to be an effective way for athletes to communicate, represent and negotiate their freedom of expression in the pursuit of international diplomacy and peace.

English Speaking Discussion Group 10

Question 1: Can Young Sports Leaders be catalysts of sports diplomacy?

Young Sports Leaders (YSLs) have demonstrated both a skill and desire to further the use of sports in the field of diplomacy. Whether as athletes, students, administrators, or teachers, YSLs are in positions to shape the future of sport and how it may be used to enhance Olympism and diplomatic efforts.

The background of current YSLs makes them particularly well-suited to addressing opportunities and challenges possible through the lens of sports.

- Motivation – YSLs are particularly engaged in current events due to the fact that they will be influenced most by these trends in their future. In many cases, such as climate change, YSLs feel a sense of urgency to contribute toward a resolution. Personal investment, dedication, and passion for the cause can create a strong force for change.
- Experience – Many YSLs have been recently, or are currently, involved in sports activities, which allow them to closely relate to the activities, experiences, and ideas of the participants. The voice of these individuals can bring relevance and innovation to the conversation.
- Technology – Technology is intuitive to YSLs, having been a prevalent part of their lives for the past few decades. They are well versed in the latest platforms, mediums, and software, allowing them to communicate in an innovative, efficient, and effective manner.
- Social Awareness – The current generation of YSLs has grown up in a unique environment, including the longest period of peacetime and in which gender equality is the norm. Due to this, YSLs often approach situations in a manner consistent with these values, promoting inclusion and peace.

However, YSLs often face numerous challenges as they seek to contribute.

- Structure and disorganisation – One of the most difficult factors for YSLs

seeking to get involved is finding where to begin. There are numerous organisations, groups, and individuals who are active in sports diplomacy; however, these entities have lacked visibility and cohesion to develop a strong network.

- Resources – The desire to create change is often tempered by the lack of funding, mentors, and training available to help jump start their efforts.
- Experience – While past experiences can be a benefit to YSLs, their lack of experience in areas of sports diplomacy can also create challenges. Networks and knowledge take time to develop, which must also be cultivated to effectively complement their passion for the cause.
- Perceptions – YSLs may encounter stereotypes or attitudes that run counter to their efforts in professional settings. Older generations may view YSLs' age as a symbol of immaturity and lack of expertise. Additionally, they may be perceived as a challenge to status quo, as they bring different values and skills to the team. This may also contribute to less visibility and recognition for YSLs' projects.

Question 2: How do we empower Young Sports Leaders and create a platform for their activities?

Young Sports Leaders exist in all corners of the globe and seek to contribute to diplomacy through sport. Utilising their passion for the cause and desire to engage with others on the topic, there is an opportunity for increased educational programming and events to develop a strong network.

The development of a toolkit of accessible educational materials is integral to the ability to spread and increase knowledge of the values of Olympism and sports diplomacy. Cost, technological requirements, availability, and awareness must be prioritised while creating programmes and platforms.

- Social networks – The connection of like-minded individuals can amplify the programming and ideas of participants. Through channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and future popular platforms, YSLs will be able to discuss best practices, share their activities, and seek advice and continuing education.
- Media
  – Podcasts – Continuing education on sports diplomacy may be

distributed through a free, downloadable, and time-efficient podcast featuring subject experts and YSLs. In this manner YSLs can highlight their successes, share best practices, obtain visibility, and seek continuing education to expand their expertise.

– Olympic Channel – Utilising the expanding Olympic Channel, sports diplomacy may be featured through a documentary and/or series format. Highlighting the success stories, the Olympic Channel can elevate the profile of sports diplomacy activities and the variety of efforts occurring worldwide.

Beyond individually concentrated educational programmes, an international forum on sports diplomacy may be convened to connect YSLs with active organisations, experts, and funders to exchange ideas. This event would expand beyond NOC delegates to ensure that all stakeholders and interested entities are able to network. This event may be held on a global scale or in cooperation with regional sports organisations or continental events, and all information can be shared locally. The event will aggregate the entities that are active in sports diplomacy and resources that are offered to expand these activities, such as grants, sponsorships, or opportunities for collaboration.

Pierre de Coubertin's statement in 1932 remains as true today as it did then, "Youth likes to be told about the future the coming society will be altruistic or will be nothing: choose between that and chaos".

CYCLE B

French Speaking Discussion Group

Question 1: How can the Olympic Truce be enforced?

In 420 BC, the city of Sparta violated the Olympic Truce by continuing the Peloponnesian War. Sparta was fined but refused to pay the penalty, which led to her exclusion from the Games for twenty years. In this rare case of violation, a sanction was imposed to enforce the Olympic Truce. In the modern Olympic Games, it took one hundred years before the Olympic Truce was re-established under the leadership of J. A. Samaranch in 1994. It is now coordinated with the UN, which invites its members throughout the world to participate in the cessation of all conflicts during the Games – without however having the authority to compel them. While this UN resolution has often been respected, sometimes it has not, as in 2008 when the war between Georgia and Russia broke out on the eve of the Beijing Olympics. There was no official reaction to it from the IOC, illustrating the paradox of the Olympic Truce: it must be respected by States, while it is the NOCs – which are private – that organise athletes' participation in the Olympic Games. So, we may wonder, how can the Olympic Truce be respected?

We could consider a ban on participation in the Olympic and Paralympic Games for the National Olympic Committee (NOC) representing the country that has not respected the Truce. However, this prevents athletes from participating individually in the Games, and they are not the ones responsible for non-compliance. Permission could be given for them to compete under the Olympic flag without however using the Games to promote their own nation's image.

The IOC could also reduce or eliminate aid granted to the NOC of the country concerned –and avoid fines, which are more difficult to impose. However,

professional and amateur athletes in this country would be directly affected by budget cuts. In addition, the legal framework of the UN resolution could be more binding. The idea is to sanction States and not NOCs. Nevertheless, the scope of this measure would be limited, as not all IOC Member States are members of the UN. Finally, the country could be prohibited from hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games for a specified period of time.

In order to promote peace –and therefore to enforce the Truce– another measure, this time preventive, would not allow manipulation of sport by nations. The team events of the Olympics (e.g. relays) could involve continental or international teams. This already exists at the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) and helps to water down national pride because success can only be achieved through collaboration between different nationalities. We may imagine going even further, by discontinuing the medals' table; the YOG, which act as a laboratory for the IOC, could test this proposal.

Question 2: How can we rethink the rewards of the Olympic Games?

> *The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win, but to take part; the important thing in Life is not triumph, but the struggle; the essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.* Pierre de Coubertin

Although the prizes awarded to the top three competitors were originally of symbolic value such as the olive wreath in ancient Greece, over time they have become an obsession for many: for athletes first, who have only this idea in mind and who often feel great disappointment at not being on the podium for the awards' ceremony, or having missed out on acquiring the gold medal; and then for countries who use the medals' table as a demonstration of their power and world domination. In this sense, we believe that the distorted perception of medals goes against the Olympic spirit desired by Pierre de Coubertin (see quotation above). We would therefore like to explore the idea of integrating other awards that would be closer to the Olympic spirit. Eventually, these awards could even replace medals, which are currently too deeply rooted in the mentalities of the sporting world.

In order to give credit to all athletes taking part in the Olympic Games, we propose the distribution of an Olympic diploma to all participants at an

official ceremony, and not just to the top eight. In this way, all athletes would be recognised for an often under acknowledged achievement, namely their very participation in the Olympics.

Moreover, respect for sporting values, and in particular fair play and team spirit, could receive a specific reward for each sport on the programme, thus encouraging the promotion of the values of Olympism.

Another proposal is to assign Olympic medallists a certain responsibility to pass on to future generations. As ambassadors, they will have a social impact through being models for younger people, especially during the YOG, for example.

In addition, they could be assigned an environmental responsibility. For example, we could give each medallist a sapling to plant that will bear his/her name and symbolise his/her performance, while promoting the environmental cause.

We believe that it would also help to organise a multinational team sports event, where all countries would merge, as is done during the Youth Olympic Games. Teams would be created by drawing lots. In this way, all countries would be united behind the teams, eliminating differences and promoting sportsmanship.

English Speaking Discussion Group 1

Question 1: How can the Olympic Games be used as a diplomatic platform to influence global stakeholders regarding environmental issues?

One small gesture that stands for the Olympic Movement is the exchanging of pins. This international diplomacy action has likely occurred hundreds of times during the 59th International Olympic Academy Young Participants Sessions. However, the majority of pins exchanged are in a small plastic bag, contributing to the global environmental crisis. It is estimated that annual CO_2 emissions from plastic could grow to more than 2.75 billion tons by 2050, which threatens attempts to meet the Paris Climate Agreement[1]. This waste would increase significantly at the Olympic Games, given the larger number of individuals present. Individuals who have attended the Olympic Games have mentioned that there are other areas that negatively impact the environment including, among others, plastic water bottles and food waste.

We propose that the Olympic Games serve as a diplomatic platform to draw attention to the global environmental crisis, by implementing practices to reduce plastic waste at Games venues. Sustainability has become a priority of the IOC through Agenda 2020 and the Sustainability Report (2018), and Tokyo 2020 announced on 11 June 2019 that its medal podiums will be made from recycled waste as part of a new sustainability initiative[2]. Our recommendation, thus, is for the IOC to request that NOCs partner with environmentally-friendly companies for their pin production, finding alternatives to plastic bags. This

1. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/15/single-use-plastics-a-serious-climate-change-hazard-study-warns
2. https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1080438/tokyo-2020-medal-podiums-to-be-made-out-of-recycled-household-and-ocean-waste

simple action could not only have an immediate impact on global stakeholders, but also leave a lasting environmental legacy of the Olympic Movement.

Question 2: Why should the variety of sex be taken into account as gender equality?

The issues of gender equality and human rights for female athletes have been brought to the forefront recently with the Caster Semenya case which deals with differences in sexual development (DSD). This is not the only instance in which gender has impacted sport and may have a negative impact on the next generation of athletes, with LGBTQ and inter-sex issues also being discussed by both international and sport stakeholders.

The IOC promotes gender equality but does not tackle the issue of the LGBTQ community. We want to utilise sports as a tool to promote human rights. By addressing these issues, the IOC has the opportunity to show that we are all human beings, and no one deserves to face harassment or discrimination. It has the potential to decrease the barriers within the sport community while also increasing the general awareness and education towards such issues.

We recommend that the IOC encourage and empower the next generation through the development of an educational book which would target current athletes, the next generation of athletes, and their parents. The book would touch on the following subjects:

- Friendship: one of the core values of Olympism
- History of some of the greatest women in sports and their struggles
- Raise awareness that it is okay to be different
- Help them grow stronger in the face of adversity
- *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (Faster, Higher, Stronger)

The book should be distributed to the NOCs and other organisations that the IOC partners with on human rights issues.

English Speaking Discussion Group 2

Question 1: What aspects of the Olympic Games are crucial to execute well in order for the Games to be a success in the eyes of both locals and tourists?

When a city is chosen to host the Olympic Games, often times the local community is not pleased that the Games will be coming to their city. Moreover, if the host country does not execute certain aspects well, visitors may not leave with a good impression of the city and may not be enticed to come back. If this is not a satisfactory experience for both locals and visitors, it could be a missed opportunity for relationship building and future diplomacy.

Firstly, infrastructure is a vital part of the Olympic experience for the local community and visiting tourists alike. Logistical operations in the Olympic Village and at airports, as well as transportation, need to be well-executed during and after the Games. This will ensure that the lives of locals are minimally disturbed and that the visitors are happy with their travel experience. Eco-friendly and sustainable renovations of dormant areas of the city will also provide additional benefits for both groups.

Sport tourism is used as an avenue to promote socio-cultural heritage, where both locals and tourists can get a chance to interact with each other during cultural activities. By involving local people to showcase their heritage and traditions the host city can educate and entertain visitors during the Olympics. When locals are excited to accept visitors and showcase their city, tourists will have a much more welcoming and pleasant experience, delivering a positive perception of the host country.

Free public viewings of competitions can also play an important role in bringing together people of different cultures at the Olympics. One possibility is to establish tents in outdoor areas where people could gather to eat, drink, co-mingle, all while watching a sporting event. The hope is that attendees would

leave the viewing party with great memories of a multicultural event, which would once again reinforce friendly relations between cultures.

The perceived success of an Olympic Games is partially contingent upon the satisfaction of the experience from both locals and visitors. If the local community feels that they are benefitting from hosting the Olympics, they will be more receptive and open to sharing their culture with foreign fans, which will circle back to providing a more rich experience for the visitors. Clean execution of logistics, as well as cultural and social engagement opportunities, will all ensure a positive experience for these two groups and contribute to more friendly and collaborative relations between all people.

Question 2: How can we change society's attitudes towards people with disabilities using the Olympic/Paralympic Movements?

The global disabled community has long battled the perception of being "outsiders" in an able-bodied world. The Paralympic Movement seeks to increase awareness, tolerance, and understanding for athletes with physical disabilities, which, in theory, should aid in changing our society's attitudes towards the handicapped population as a whole.

Intolerance often stems from a fear of the unknown. People are afraid of those who are different than them, and only by creating opportunities for able-bodied and disabled communities to interact can we create acceptance and more favorable attitudes toward people with disabilities. Sport is an ideal environment for this, and we can use the media, international sporting events, and local disabled communities to change perceptions. Although it can be a challenge to measure the success of the Olympic/Paralympic Movement in achieving this goal, it is vital that we keep working to create these engagement opportunities to ensure a worldwide culture of acceptance and diplomacy.

Firstly, we can use digital and social media to demonstrate that physically disabled people can still participate in sport and are inspiring in their own ways. When people get to know Paralympians on a deeper level, the fear of the unknown is minimised and there is a greater sense of a united community.

The venues at both the Olympic and Paralympic Games provide another opportunity for able-bodied and disabled people to have shared experiences. Similar to the 2018 Youth Olympic Games, each Paralympic venue can offer

fans, and especially children, a chance to try out the sport. On the other hand, at Olympic venues fans can participate in a version of the sport in which one of the senses, like sight or hearing, is taken away. Able-bodied people can therefore get a sense of the difficulties the disabled community faces every day, which will once again encourage understanding and appreciation.

Engagement of local disabled citizens is a vital activation at the Games in an attempt to erase the line between "normal" and "abnormal" people and instead come together as one sport-loving community. In addition, handicapped children can accompany Olympic athletes onto the field in sports like football, basketball, and tennis to further increase the visibility of the disabled. Lastly, the local organising committee can encourage disabled citizens to become Olympic volunteers. These residents will have an opportunity to work in an organised setting (which can help open doors in their professional career) and to interact with able-bodied volunteers, which will further integrate the two communities.

Encouraging greater interaction, communication, and cooperation between the disabled and non-disabled will reduce fear and intolerance that exists between these groups in the community. Collaborative consultation is vital in order to choose the methods that will create the most benefit and utility for disabled persons. The more we expose our society, especially the youth, to handicapped people, the better we can promote Olympic and Paralympic values in building a courageous, respective, and tolerant society in the future. In so doing, current and future generations can have the skills and understanding necessary to be more effective in international diplomacy.

English Speaking Discussion Group 3

Question 1: What kind of movement can we create to identify crisis and make an impact through sports?

The movement is based on the second Fundamental Principle of Olympism:

> *The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.* (IOC Olympic Charter, 2015, p. 13)

We can create a movement within a movement. This means that it consists of a global and a local system. It is a dynamic solution, which develops and improves over time. The world is in constant change and new problems arise in different periods of time and areas, so the programme also has to be adaptable. The target groups for the movement are marginalised groups (such as minorities like immigrants, refugees, socially deprived people). They are different in every country.

People, who are joining the movement can specify the problem in their country and identify how it can be solved through sports and then can focus on a concrete target group.

Everybody can easily join the movement, but we need especially persons from the participating countries, who have the will, similar cultural background and spark to start with it. Then the followers from their countries help to make it work. The aim of the movement is to make an impact and there is no chance of doing it without great leaders and followers.

The key steps for this movement are:

- Identifying the marginalised group.
- Defining the concrete problem they have.
- Creating a solution for this concrete issue.

- Implementing the movement through leaders and followers.
- Making an impact through sports.
- Reflecting the results of the local movement.
- Disseminating the principles but adapting them to a concrete location.

Question 2: How can the movement be effective, sustainable and adaptable worldwide?

We can organise, structure and implement the movement by having guidelines for the leaders, who are joining it. They will have a starting point and can adapt it for their respective countries. Since they will be the ambassadors at the local community level, it is important they receive adequate education on the principles of the movement. Leaders of the movement can be people from the Young Change-Makers (YCM) programme as they already have the spark, ambition and initiative for this movement. It is good to use ideas from the YCM programme, since it has operated in similar contexts and towards the same goals. The IOC also started with YCM+ programme, which will help to activate also the movement.

We can open the YCM+ of IOC and involve partners such as participants from previous IOA Youth Sessions. At IOA sessions there is always at least one participant representing their country and leaders of the movement can be the previous participants, this will enable to broaden the movement worldwide. We can use discussion groups to involve people from outside (guests), who are already related to the sports field, in order to bring more perspectives and ideas to the discussion – something that may help to find more effective, sustainable and adaptable projects.

Creating a network of leaders will help to share the knowledge. The leaders should have meeting sessions for the exchange of experience. By doing so, the movement will have some guidelines: how the overall principles are adapted to specific sports.

The movement needs funds to organise sports activities. The funds can come from various sources, such as the IOC, TOP partners, governmental and non-governmental funds, local partners or even EU or UN funds. Instead of hiring coaches, we can use universities to involve students as volunteers.

Best practice examples are:

- "Pink Shoe" in Norway – empowerment of girls' activity in sports
- "I'mPOSSIBLE" in Paralympics – official education programme of the Paralympic Movement
- "Transforma" programme in Rio Olympics – education programme that has spread the Olympic and Paralympic values

Plus, recent programmes which are initiated by YCMs.

To attract organisations and sponsors, visual content can be created in order to point out the issue, the benefits and importance of the project to society. Meetings and presentations can also be used for this goal.

From communities to communities!

English Speaking Discussion Group 4

Question 1: Gender (in) equality – Do the IOC and the Olympic Movement make the world a more tolerant and understanding place through sport?

In the Ancient Olympic Games, sports were deemed as competitive and masculine affairs. While men competed to display their level of strength and athletic adeptness, women, on the other hand, were restricted from watching the contests and to compete in them. Even at this present date when equality is a topical matter that has received much discourse, sport still remains a male domain. The ideology of gender plays a big role in how sport has been carried out through the ages. The idea that men are "supposed to be" superior has been reduced in many sports.

To start with, the representation of women in the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is currently 38%, which is historically high. Compared to September 2013, women's representation in commissions has increased by 70% and women are now present in all commissions. However, at the present moment, the IOC members consist of only 35 females of the total 95 members. Thus, the International Olympic Academy (IOA) has only had male presidents and deans. We are pleased with the number of females taking part in the 59th Young Participants Session (participants: 70 males/86 females and coordinators: seven males/ten females).

In 1963, the Equal Pay Act legally ended unequal compensation for men and women in the United States. However, equality in pay for soccer players in the United States has been an exception to the rule. Currently, athletes from the U.S. women's national team are in a lawsuit with the U.S. Soccer Federation on the basis of equal pay with the men. Despite winning three World Cups and four Olympic gold medals, the discrepancy of payment cannot be denied. From 2013-2016, men earned an average of $13,166/win, while women only

received $4,950/win. The counter argument for inequality has been historically highlighted by the revenue margin. However, the numbers actually show that the women's team generates more revenue and has larger attendance at games.

Just last May, the Asturias Squash Championship was held in Spain. Sexism and machismo were evident when the prizes were handed out. The female winners received a hair removal kit and a vibrator; meanwhile the male winners received a trophy.

As for recommendations, we suggest the following to the IOC and the Olympic family:

- Awareness: We are all advocates to continue to bring emphasis to this issue and it is our duty to humanity to keep the fight alive, until the matter is no longer an issue.
- Educational Programmes: The education must start from the IOC/NOCs.
- Mandatory Equal Opportunity for positions in the IOC: 50% male/50% female.

We firmly believe that sport is a tool to reach equality between men and women, but it is a fact that much still remains to be done, starting with the IOC as it advocates for tolerance and understanding.

Question 2: Restricting measures of International Relations: How the Olympic Movement can be used to achieve substantive truce and peace?

Sport can be a tool for diplomacy between countries, becoming the first step of engagement between states in a hostile relationship. Exchanging sports can imply that both nations recognise each other. On the other side, boycotts of sport or denial of visa to athletes can be seen as a way to decrease relations. Time and time again, the relationship between sport and international politics is highlighted for the world to see.

In tennis there was a men's doubles pair, consisting of Rohan Bopanna from India and Aisam Qureshi from Pakistan that was conquering the world with their skills. Unfortunately, due to government politics, the pair had to be split from each other. This happened because of an incident in 1947 when the two countries were separated. It was clear that the government did not want to see the two athletes sharing a court together and the athletes did not have a say on

the matter. However, when the political tension started to melt, they came back as a team in 2010. The main intention of them getting back together is to create peace between the two countries.

In 2008, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan invited Turkey's then president Abdullah Gul to attend a soccer game in Yerevan between the two national teams. Turkey has been at odds with Armenia over a disagreement from 1715 that Armenians called a "genocide" and because of that Turkey was consistently rejected. The trip was widely seen as a symbolic gesture to normalise relations between the neighbors.

The Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee (CTOC) and the Chinese Olympic Committee are two different Olympic Committees because of the agreement between the IOC and the CTOC, signed in 1981. After this agreement, athletes from Chinese Taipei can join the games on their own. Through this agreement, the IOC made peace between China and Taiwan in the Olympic Games (OG).

So, how can the Olympic Movement be used to achieve substantive truce and peace? Our recommendations are as follows:

- Draft a memorandum to have an Olympic Truce for all time, not just during the OG.
- Open visas for athletes to all needed countries.
- Create more opportunities for rival nations to compete in international competition to demonstrate how two conflicting nationalities can interact peacefully through sport.

Sport can unite a group of people from different backgrounds directing them to work together to achieve a common goal. This powerful phenomenon can be used as an example to achieve positive changes in international relations through the transference of Olympic values and asserting substantive peace.

English Speaking Discussion Group 5

Question 1: How can refugee-hosting-communities employ stakeholders to change the perception of refugees in communities?

Refugee communities have been increasing in number, size, and geographical reach and countries that are challenged by this crisis are facing harder conditions every day. They are affected financially, politically, economically, and with increased scarcity of resources. Hence the hosting communities are not well-accepting the presence of refugees under recent conditions, especially in developing countries. For example, during the 2010 economic crisis in Greece, there was a high refugee inflow to the country and all the international support funds were allocated for refugees while the local community believed they needed to focus on the locals instead.

Since the main ambassadors of the Olympic Movement at the national level are the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) in different countries, along with commissions such as Peace and Sport organisations, these stakeholders of any community are best approached by the NOCs. Stakeholders include: Government institutions and officials; media in its various platforms; the public; the private sector and sponsors, and non-governmental organisations.

First, the NOCs could start by establishing relations with ministries of education, as education is the first and most crucial step in making any change in the community, and work on collaboration projects targeting public schools and universities. The purpose is to educate the young segment of society about the refugees, their status, their needs, and how they can be engaged with. These projects can have training workshops and sports activities for athletes, coaches, and referees; sports officials merging locals with refugees. They can organise sports activities and training workshops on Olympism.

Furthermore, knowing that media is currently the highest-voiced weapon, the NOCs should collaborate with different media platforms and launch awareness campaigns explaining the disadvantaged status of refugees around the world,

as well as having Olympians or celebrities deliver short motivational messages to the public, emphasising that any step taken towards peace could make a difference. In addition, the NOCs could have online and offline campaigns to reach different segments of society. For example, they can produce short videos about the great examples of peace movements among the Olympic community and Olympic Games (PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games for example).

Moreover, NOCs can partner with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international agencies with refugee-focused programmes and insert sport and Olympism education to be delivered to refugees. Also, they can have a scouting programme inside the camps and athletes would be qualified for scholarships through the Olympic Solidarity[1] funds for refugee-athletes.

Lastly, NOCs can launch sponsored sports programmes for refugees and give high publicity to them to increase the trust of the public. Being the largest segment of the stakeholders, once the public sees investors are on board with the NOCs to benefit such refugees, the public and the private companies will be willing to volunteer or be educated about the refugees in their countries increasing their acceptance.

Question 2: How can sport communities increase the participation of para-athletes, recreationally and on the elite level?

Para-athletic communities in most countries do not get the support that they deserve. As a result, there is a lack of accessibility for individuals with disabilities to participate in physical activities. This could be one of the main reasons for low participation of disabled individuals who are enthusiastic about sports and other various physical activities. To combat this, we came up with several ideas to support, empower, and publicize the para-athletic community. These ideas range from: (1) Making sure that disabled individuals have influential decision-making roles in sports; (2) Using para-athletes as role models for younger generations and motivating children to take part in athleticism; (3) Increasing the participation of para-volunteers in sporting events and Olympic Games; (4) Advise government institutions to regularly run statistics studies on people with disabilities in order to keep record of where the most needs are for sports

1. https://www.olympic.org/olympic-solidarity

intervention; (5) Administer joint venture partnerships (i.e.: competition and practice sessions) with National Federations and Paralympic Teams.

As highlighted in the Guinness advertisement video[2], one way to increase awareness for para-sports is to re-introduce it as a social recreational activity. Sport is not exclusive to competition and elite stature, but more often than not it is about enjoying sports for the joy of camaraderie, leisure and exercise. Para-sports should be enjoyed considering these aspects as well. Ultimately, this kind of exposure would lead to an increase of visibility for para-athleticism as not just special events, but also as fun, everyday enjoyable experiences.

Another idea that we would like to expand on is the use of able-bodied sports to promote the equivalency of para-sports. For example, para-volleyball is played when the athletes sit on the ground and play the game. In order to increase awareness of this and raise interest in the sport, a demonstration of para-volleyball could be played just before an able-bodied volleyball match. Therefore, people will become more aware and more knowledgeable about para-volleyball. This will result in people with disabilities to be more inclined to participate in the sport they love to play.

Furthermore, the lack of knowledge about para-sports can, in some countries, result in less appreciation, less funding and less participation. When we are more informed, and thus more knowledgeable about certain aspects, we tend to take more action and become more involved. One way to improve the lack of participation is to educate students and teachers within educational realms. Should we find a way to partner with schools to implement para-sports within their physical education programmes, we can increase the participation of para-sports. This will then create a "trickle-down effect" – when participation increases, appreciation for para-sports also increases. As a result, financing and support for para-sports will increase.

We understand that each country faces their own challenges regarding para-athletic participation. The most important thing for us is to lend ideas that sporting federations may consider while they think of ways to design programmes that may work for individual countries. The main idea is to educate the public about para-sports, thus raising awareness about the ability for people with disabilities to take part in sports, and eventually increase participation and appreciation of the entire sporting community.

2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iiB3YNTcsAA&feature=youtu.be

English Speaking Discussion Group 6

Question 1: How can active athletes be given the opportunity to be involved and vocal in sport decision making?

Most of the professional athletes today spend their athletic careers focusing on their training and performance. Very few get involved in decision making in their clubs, federations, NOCs and international governing bodies. Those that do, usually do it towards the end of their athletic careers. We believe that increasing athletes' involvement in governance could be beneficial for all sides involved for the following reasons:

- It would give athletes a voice and the power to influence decisions that impact them the most.
- It would provide athletes with professional management experience, which will serve them after they retire from competing and will ease their transition into the job market.
- It would help inject "new blood" into governing bodies, which today are often controlled by older generations.

We propose a few practical suggestions on how to increase the opportunity for athletes to get more involved in sport governance.

One roadblock in engaging active athletes to be more involved is the complicated nature of domestic and international sport administration. This would need to be addressed to allow a layperson to understand the hierarchy of, for example, national and international sport federations, Olympic Committees, IOC, WADA, CAS. Preferably, the new platform would fit into the existing social media and technology ecosystem to increase adoption. The desired result is to create a clear communication path for active athletes to voice their concerns when required. For example, active athletes would be able to comment and communicate concerns about a dangerous Ski-Cross track at the Olympic Games or lack of sport equity in Guatemala. Athletes would know where, who and how their concerns were eliciting change within any sport organisation.

Secondly, a hard requirement for the IOC and Ifs would be that all committees within the organisations include at least one athlete. The penalty for not complying should be severe enough to deter non-compliance.

Lastly, an effective communication strategy tailored to active athletes - 100-page annual reports and 30-page athlete agreements written for lawyers will not be read by competing athletes. It can be done through a dedicated app that condenses and translates information into digestible information or via a dedicated team of staff. The communication strategy will need to create an environment where, for instance, an active football athlete at their first Olympics will understand how a theoretical FIFA decision to increase the professional player quota to seven will affect their training and competition plan.

We believe that the above-mentioned practical suggestions, if implemented, will result in increased involvement of active athletes in sports governance. By lowering the bar for participation and mandating a quota of athletes in commissions, active athletes would be able to get involved earlier on, for the benefit of themselves, their future, and their sports.

Question 2: Would permanent Olympic Games locations weaken or strengthen Olympic diplomacy?

The power of the Olympic Movement is rooted in the economic, cultural and political power behind hosting an Olympic Games. Rotating the host city every four years gives countries the opportunity to showcase their cultures and gain political and, potentially, also economic value. Nonetheless, at the same time, it also bears negative implications – the building of sports facilities that may be abandoned after the Games or the violation of human rights during the preparations for the Games. In the hypothetical scenario where the Olympic Games are hosted in a permanent location for 48 years at a time (one summer and one winter location) countries would bid for the right to be the "cultural hosts" and outfit the village as they please. The effect this idea has on the strength of Olympic diplomacy depends on which economic, cultural or political indicator has a higher value to the Olympic community.

Two perspectives are considered detailing the effects of this hypothetical situation. The first proposes that power of Olympic diplomacy would be weakened due to the following:

- The strength of cultural immersion and interaction is weakened for athletes and tourists due to a manufactured environment versus an authentic one.
- Lack of unique local sponsors would diminish the diversity of Olympic sponsors.
- The soft power the IOC earns with countries relying on their funds to host is lost as countries will no longer need to invest large sums to host.
- The power to influence location-specific geopolitical events (e.g. North and South Korea during the PyeongChang Games) is lost as a permanent location would most likely be in a neutral area.

The counter argument proposes that Olympic diplomacy is strengthened in the long run through:

- The ability to be a "cultural host" opens up hosting to developing countries with limited financial resources.
- World class facilities would be available to any country in non-Olympic years.
- The environmental sustainability of the Games would drastically increase.
- Managing human rights requirements for potential hosts would be significantly easier.
- Use of hosting the Games for geopolitical aims will be much less likely.

This report mapped out the effect of switching to a permanent host city on the power of the Olympic Movement. Given the significant costs of rotating host cities every four years, we believe that striving for a permanent host would be beneficial for society. We hope that our analysis of the downside of rotating to a permanent host city can be used to address these issues and mitigate the disadvantages – a task which requires further study.

English Speaking Discussion Group 7

Question 1: What are the effects of hosting mega sport events to improve a country's international relations?

The Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup are some of the most recognised mega sports events in the world. Hosting large sporting events requires countries to undertake big projects and initiatives, resulting in direct economic and socio-cultural benefits. Amongst these benefits is the enhancement of diplomatic, cultural relations and image of the hosting country. Hosting a mega sport event needs resources but in many cases countries achieve intangible benefits including valuable brand names that could then attract foreign investment, increased international trade and tourism.

1. The cultural exchange that happens at the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony and other sport events can open room for dialogue and creates new relations between athletes, media agencies, volunteers and spectators. Therefore, existing relations will improve and the communication barriers can be broken down.

   For example, for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia all communication was translated to major languages like French and English which enhanced the relationships between countries. Another example would be the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo. The Japanese government modernised infrastructure and it has become one of the most advanced modern cities in the world today. For the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, the Local Organising Committee has implemented Olympic education programmes that help students learn more about foreign cultures.
2. Mega sport events enable dialogue among countries in conflict. For instance, the Olympic Truce is a useful tool which allows temporary peace to take place and creates the opportunity for countries in conflicts to find a common language. Prior to the PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games

in 2018, a peaceful dialogue was established between North and South Korea in order to stop the nuclear threat that was looming in the Korean Peninsula. This process provided ground for the joint march of the two countries at the Opening Ceremony of the event and for the first time a unified Korean ice hockey team was formed. Since then, the dialogue between the Head of States of the two countries has been held on a more frequent basis.

3. The host country has an enormous chance to shatter and change the former stereotypes and convey a new message through sport. Accompanying events can not only entertain but also educate and inform the larger public about its culture, traditions and norms. This can give a life-changing experience to some which may in many ways be a peaceful and diplomatic experience through sports that are free from political influence. The Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games gave us renewed optimism, unity and national pride.

In conclusion, the main reasons why a large number of countries and cities bid for hosting such events is that they can reap economic and cultural benefits for the local area. In addition, these events serve as tools for opening a dialogue between conflicting countries and creating a perception that favours the host countries through effective branding campaigns.

Question 2: How can sport be better implemented in society to break down religious, cultural and language barriers?

Sport has the ability to give us something that nothing else can – unity and peace. Different peoples can come together through the enjoyment and excitement that is sport to socialise and connect. Sport creates a stage where players must work together and look past skin colour, gender, race, politics and religion.

> *Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to you in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair.*
>
> Nelson Mandela

The Olympic flag represents and unites the world's different continents no

matter their size or standing. The Olympic Games are a spectacular event that brings us all together to celebrate in harmony and diminish discriminatory barriers. Outside of the Games, in countries which are home to minority groups or refugees, we must aim to include them in our sport society. The development of the International Olympic Exchange programme and its sport-centred camps will give people the opportunity to share their own culture and experiences.

At the Olympics we see the breaking down of barriers between diverging cultures such as North and South Korea jointly marching in the PyeongChang Olympic Games Opening Ceremony. With the inclusion of non-competitive cultural activities such as dance and art in the Olympic Games, the whole world can come together as one. We recommend that the IOC hosts more social activities for Olympians, volunteers, participants, IOC members and the public to spread cultural diversity during and outside of the Games period. As we are living in a technological age, we should open channels to disseminate religious, cultural and lingual messages via technological innovations and social media.

Sport provides us with a common language to achieve the same goal and break down barriers. This notion can be exemplified through the learning of sports which are unfamiliar to the majority. Exchange programmes such as the European Commission's Erasmus+ project that introduce sport, culture and religions of different nations help people to develop a better understanding of the world. Further investment in programmes similar to Erasmus+ is needed to ensure the development of greater tools and educational resources to a wider variety of countries.

Whether it is a friendly match or a competition, we are all in this for the same reason. We want to be a part of the sport, the world and its people. It gives us the assurance of not being alone and helps to advance acceptance of one another. We must appreciate everyone involved in sport no matter their background or standing to further disband stereotypes and barriers. The inclusion of cultural activities into the IOC programmes will help the worldwide dissemination of Olympism and decrease the divide of the wider world. Everyone is united and in it for the same reason - whether you are rich or poor, black or white, male or female - sport is sport.

English Speaking Discussion Group 8

Question 1: How can the IOC improve the "openness" of countries to support refugees?

A refugee is someone who has been forced from their home because it is dangerous for them to stay. Some countries welcome them with an open heart, some do not. Migration strikes at the very heart of a central metathesiophobia, or fear of change, fear of the unknown or an expectation of loss (identity, religion, language, and culture) and the power and privileges associated with that identity (The Catalyst, 2018). By reflecting on historical events, we know that migration is human and the associated changes present challenges and opportunities. Considering the significant number of refugees around the world, there is an increasing need for social inclusion initiatives.

The International Olympic Committee's establishment of a Refugee Team for the Rio Summer Olympics is a perfect example of initiatives needed. The team competed under the IOC flag, offering a symbol of hope for all 68.5 million displaced people in the world. Inclusion of a Refugee Team at the Winter Olympics is a good way to further this work. Engaging refugees in sports integrates them into society, inspires people and creates role models.

Communication and marketing about the establishment of the IOC Olympic Refugee Team can be improved. The IOC could establish cultural education initiatives using local artists and athletes in host countries during Games time. It can also further utilise the power of social media to connect with global followers by aligning with high profile sports people with large followings.

National Olympic Committees could be utilised further by educating them on the importance of refugee integration through sport. The IOC can encourage NOCs to develop national refugee inclusion strategies by supporting them with ideas and resources. Fun, rather than competition, needs to be focused on as refugees are most often from conflict torn countries so participation is key.

It is important for nations to give refugees a "face" to humanize them and educate the general population. The media can support this by sharing stories of refugees, especially athletes with refugee backgrounds. An example of this is currently in The Netherlands where photographs are shown in public areas to tell individual stories (UAF, 2019). This has supported locals to connect with refugees and understand them, rather than fear them.

The IOC can do even more by using Olympic diplomacy as a tool to cooperate with organisations such as the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and Special Olympics. According to the United Nations, "refugees with disabilities are more likely to be sidelined in every aspect of humanitarian assistance" (UN, 2019). Creating a Paralympic and Special Olympic Refugee Team could open a dialogue between committees to better include people with disabilities.

If the IOC focuses on increased sharing and knowledge about the global benefits of refugee inclusion in sport, countries and their populations will improve their understanding and acceptance.

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Question 2: How can the International Olympic Committee tackle violence and hatred in sports?

George Orwell once said, "Sports is war minus shooting". In fact, sport has never been completely separated from violence and hatred. Sport is the universal platform for peace, but it is also a platform for violent expression. There have

been instances of fans expressing their support by committing violent acts towards rivals. It usually refers to football, but also occurs in other sports. At the Rio 2016 Olympic Games Brazilian fans were hostile towards Argentinians fans, after being provoked during a tennis match.

Fans can also be violent against athletes. For example, in 2004 when the football team, Hajduk, split from Croatia lost their match, the fans dug eleven graves overnight in the centre of the football field, to show the players what could happen to them if they continue losing. Athletes themselves can sometimes share such attitudes. The famous water polo game between the Soviet Union and Hungary during the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, just after the USSR invaded Hungary when players were beating each other, and Australian fans were about to lynch Soviet players. This showed the public the hostile environment both countries were living at that time.

The Olympic spirit appears to influence both athletes and fans. We believe that the power of the Olympic Games could be further employed by other sports organisations to help tackle hatred and violence in sports arenas.

The IOC is sometimes called the United Nations of international sport. It should take a leading role in sharing these ideals and values, not only in times of the Olympic Games when the aforementioned Olympic spirit is the most visible, but also beyond the Games. The IOC is not the entire sports community, it is just part of it. We think it is important that all sports entities work together because that is the only way we can ensure a constant, active role towards peace.

We propose that the IOC start initiatives that can be shared by the entire sports community in order to more effectively promote brotherhood and international understanding among nations and societies. This could include founding a programme called United Against Violence which can be supported during all sports events worldwide, in a similar manner as FIFA promotes "Say no to Racism – My Game is Fair Play". The IOC, with its leading role in international sport, could call the international sports community to take the same attitude and approach when acts of violence are seen throughout sports.

English Speaking Discussion Group 9

Question: How can we improve female representation in sports leadership roles?

At the 2016 Rio Olympics, 45% of participants were female. A similar statistic was seen at the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games, where female participants accounted for 42% of the athlete population. This distribution of participation was reflected in the representation of women across the twenty-six commissions of the International Olympic Committee in 2018 (42.7%). Despite IOC goals to reach gender equality across all of its structures, there remains an under representation of females in leadership roles at the executive level (as of 1 January 2019, only 33% of IOC members were female, and only 30.8% of the IOC executive board were female).

Within our current structures, there is a much greater representation of male leaders in the top positions than there are female. This trend is also seen within national sports governance structures.

There are many existing projects that can support the female pathway to sports leadership roles. Furthermore, there are also a range of female only sporting events and festivals. We believe that the female only events and festivals provide a sound opportunity to support the promotion of programmes that focus on female leaders in sport and can be used to create awareness of leadership pathways.

We propose a strategy, supported by the IOC, which raises awareness of leadership programmes and pathways to positions of leadership in sport for girls and women. This could be achieved by creating a group of IOC members (commission) responsible for disseminating information about programmes and pathways through a number of mediums:

- A dedicated website with connected social media.
- A dedicated conference that has a focus on women's leadership in sport,

and also relies on male allies to share their experiences and advice in leadership in sport settings.

- A mobile promotions booth that has a presence at female-specific sporting events. This booth could disseminate informative resources about female leadership programmes and pathways and begin the conversation about female representation in sports leadership.

Question 2: How can the human rights of female athletes be better protected?

Many athletes are confronting the violation of their fundamental rights, from the horrors of sex and child abuse, to racism, discrimination, economic exploitation, unsafe environments and the suppression of freedom of speech. As the governing body of the Olympic Movement, the IOC has both a duty and the leverage to embed the fundamental rights of athletes throughout the Olympic Movement.

In 2018, the IOC set up an advisory committee on human rights chaired by Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. In the same year, the IOC also published a Declaration of Player Rights. However, the WPA (World Players Association) declared that:

> *"The rule books of world sport impose thousands of pages of onerous obligations, but none clearly spell out the internationally recognised human rights of athletes", said Brendan Schwab, Executive Director of the World Players Association. "The result is an unjust system of sports law that lacks legitimacy and fails to protect the very people who sit at the heart of sport. We are making it clear that athlete rights can no longer be ignored. They must be able to quickly access justice".*

The General Assembly of The United Nations proclaims The Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, which is explained in Article 2:

> *Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national*

or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Examples:

- The U.S. Women's Football Team has made news in recent years for standing up for equal pay for equal play. Historically the U.S women's team has outperformed the men's side on the field and in the stands but has been paid significantly less
- In golf, cycling, and tennis female athletes compete in fewer rounds/ distance than their male counterparts
- However, in Norway football federation prize money is paid equally to both teams. The women's team received a pay raise of two-and-a-half million Kroner (£225,651) meaning that both sides are paid six million Kroner (£541,651)

The solution is to ensure that all athletes, with gender aside, be treated on the basis of qualification. This includes all area of sport, from facility access to prize money to financial support and media coverage. The responsibility falls jointly on the IOC and National Olympic Committees.

English Speaking Discussion Group 10

Question 1: How can the Paralympic Movement promote Sport Diplomacy?

Since the inaugural Paralympic Games in 1960, the Paralympic Movement has made steady progress toward the vision of a more inclusive society. The first edition of the Paralympic Games in Rome included 400 athletes from 23 countries[1], and grew to 4328 athletes from 159 countries in the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, assuring the visibility of people with disabilities.

In preparation for the Paralympic Games, host cities must commit to providing resources, such as accommodation and transportation for athletes, support personnel, spectators, volunteers, and administrators. In many cases, this demand exceeds the available supply and the cities must make adaptations. Leading up to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, the Paralympic Movement has elevated issues such as the availability of accessible hotel rooms, facilities able to accommodate guide dogs, and transportation augmentations to ease accessibility for the athletes. This is in addition to sporting facilities, infrastructure, and signage that is required. Unmet demand in Tokyo has resulted in expressed concern and request for improvements[2] from Paralympic delegations and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). One example of this was in Yokohama where the city responded to unfulfilled accommodations demand by offering financial assistance to support the refurbishment of existing facilities to meet the requirement of a barrier-free ordinance. The issue by itself has stirred conversations relating to the challenges faced by people with disabilities amongst the able-bodied population.

The Paralympic Movement:

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1. https://www.paralympic.org/the-ipc/paralympic-games
2. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/06/10/national/social-issues/wheelchair-accessible-hotel-rooms-still-issue-ahead-tokyo-2020-paralympics-olympics/#.XP-X3tMzZn5

- Can create visibility and awareness for the community of people with disabilities.
- Can steer the general population to acknowledge the basic needs of people with disabilities through government intervention.
- Establishes criteria for future host countries to have sufficient mandatory barrier-free ordinance for the Games.
- Can set precedent for governments and any other organisational assistance for future host countries.

Question 2: How can the inclusion of sports in the Olympic programme influence diplomacy between countries?

Since the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, the Olympic programme has been subject to change, including and removing sports through the Olympiads, reflecting the social, political, technological and economical developments of the time. These modifications often amplify cultural trends and offer a common platform for cooperation, which in turn, provide opportunities for cultural diplomacy to showcase soft power.

Wrestling has been a staple of the Olympic programme since its inception and it is widely practiced around the world. In 2013, the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Executive Board voted to omit wrestling from the 2020 Olympics as part of an effort to modernise the sport programme, emphasising priorities such as TV popularity, ticket sales, universality, gender balance, and anti-doping efforts[3]. However, less than seven months later, wrestling was reinstated, defeating sports such as baseball, softball, karate, squash and sport climbing. The successful reinstatement was due, in large part, to the organised cooperation of numerous stakeholders and nations to advocate their interest in the sport. Events were organised around the world, which brought untraditional nations together, such as the United States, Iran, and Russia. This strong display of solidarity highlighted the power of sport to surpass traditional diplomatic barriers and unite diverse entities.

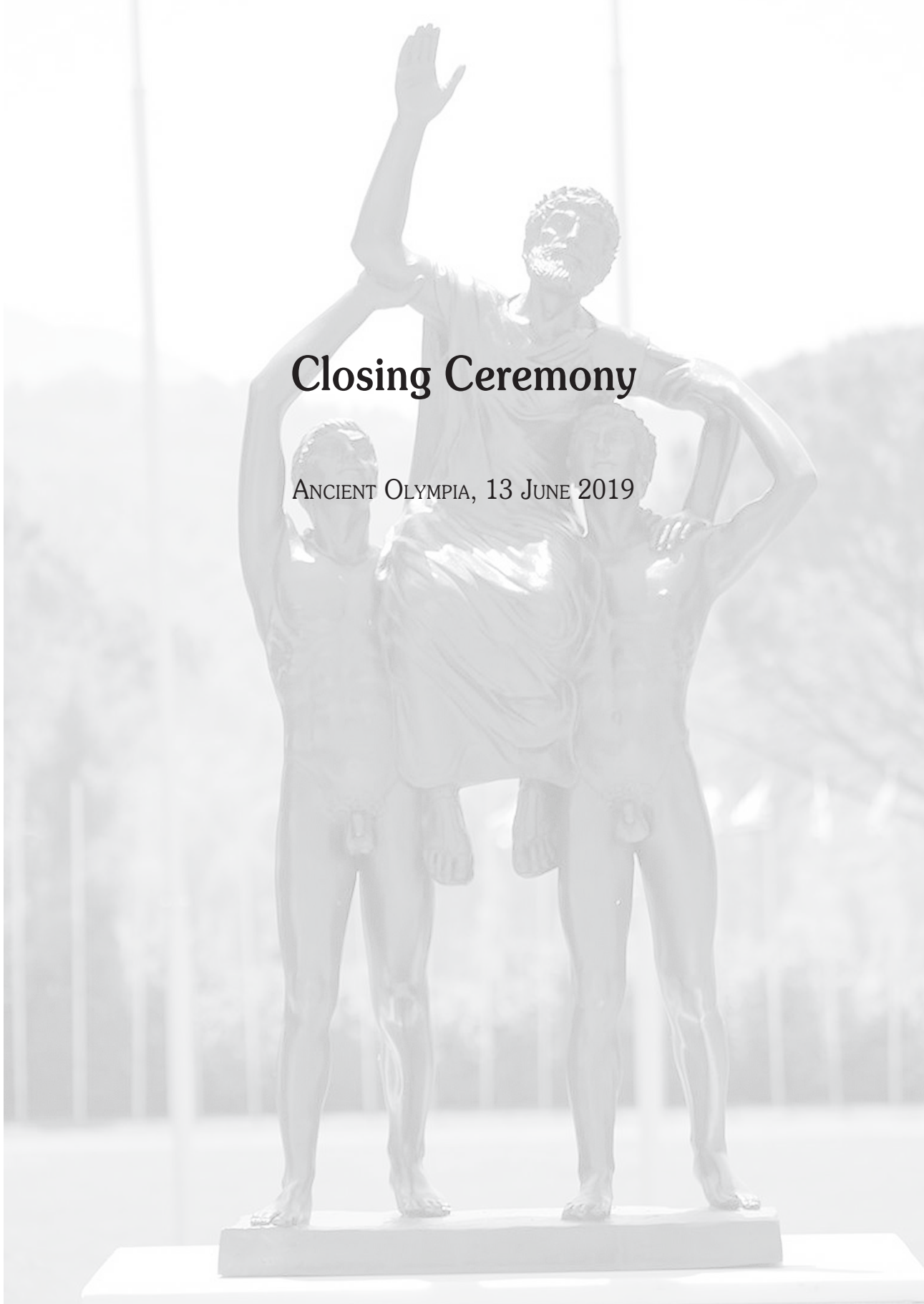
Through Agenda 2020 and the New Norm, the IOC permits flexibility for host cities to propose the inclusion of one or more sports for their edition of

3. https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2013/feb/12/wrestling-axe-2020-olympic-games

the Games[4]. This important change to the Games structure allows a significant opportunity for the host city to select event(s) that reflect the unique culture, talents, and interests of their citizens. This expression of cultural diplomacy offers an opportunity to showcase the city and nation on one of the world's largest stages. This is illustrated in the inclusion of karate in the Tokyo 2020 Games and its omission from the Paris 2024 Games, as its replacement with breaking. Additionally, the selection of these events may often be used as a tool of soft power, as the host city may likely select event(s) in which they may be the most successful. This choice can convey their strength in a particular field, building their international reputation, offering a vehicle for dialogue, reconciliation and integration.

E-sports is a topic of focus for potential future incorporation to the Games programme; however, there has been strong debate on both sides of the question. Due to the breadth of activities included under the umbrella of e-sports, there is a challenge of defining the culture of the sport and therefore, the effectiveness of a host city or organised campaign to advocate for its inclusion in their edition of the Games. As the sport is further refined and brought into the mainstream by future generations, the culture will significantly develop and permit use for cultural diplomacy and potential for soft power. The digital versus physical nature of e-sports facilitates engagement with all corners of the globe during each game, breaking down the traditionally limited geographic reach of singular events. This also extends to virtual training, spectators, and new media outlets. The potential for this sport is in its infancy and provides the opportunity to bring a new culture to the Games, as well as an extended reach for sports diplomacy and soft power.

4. https://stillmed.olympic.org/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/Documents/Olympic-Agenda-2020/Olympic-Agenda-2020-20-20-Recommendations.pdf#_ga=2.235539777.1369633392.1560271393-1582942212.1554221642



Closing Ceremony

Ancient Olympia, 13 June 2019

Presentation of the participation diplomas by the IOA President.

ADDRESS
on behalf of the Session's Participants
by Eva LOMBARDI (MON)
by Oluseyi SMITH (CAN)

Eva LOMBARDI (MON)

First of all, we would like to thank the International Olympic Academy for organising this Session. We also wish to thank all the staff for having given us such a pleasant stay; particularly, Professor Georgiadis and the coordinators, Panos, Jordan, Richard, Lucia, Maitreyee, Marija, Megan, Rafael, Sarah, Xavier, Simone, Fabio, Georgia, Graciela, Jonathan, Kathrin and Laura. Finally, we would like to thank the speakers for providing us with the opportunity to exchange views and share in their experiences.

Eva Lombardi from Monaco spoke on behalf of the French-speaking participants.

These two weeks have been a real cultural and social enrichment. Indeed, it is rare to experience the richness of our world through living with 171 people of different nationalities! Despite our cultural differences –that could have distanced us from one another– our human and sporting values have triumphed and enabled us to form this beautiful union. We embody perfectly the theme of this Session which is Olympic diplomacy and peace. Indeed, during our sports and artistic events, fair play, team spirit and respect for others were ever-present.

We are often told that our generation is very promising. There can be no doubt about that given our motivation, after a night of dancing, to attend lectures, to interact with speakers and with each other. We greatly appreciated all the moments of sharing that we were able to experience through the social evenings and our discussions. The speeches by the Olympians particularly touched us, as they revealed the sacrifices many of them were required to make in fulfilment of their dreams. Finally, the presentations demonstrated that sports and Olympic values have a place in our daily lives; and education through sport is a good way to promote them. To conclude, let me quote Nelson Mandela: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".

Oluseyi SMITH (CAN)

As the session comes to an end and our thoughts start drifting towards returning to our regular lives; I would like all of us to take a moment to consider the behind the scenes work required to organise this kind of event. From organising the travel, the tourist trips, inviting lecturers, keeping us healthy and safe; to the food, the cleaning etc. With that in mind it is only fitting for us to give our respect and heartfelt thanks to the lecturers/professors, coordinators, lifeguards, medics, men at the gate (who let us back after 2 am), cleaning staff and Panos.

As a group we were fortunate to participate in a year with such an interesting and relevant theme. Not only were we able to discuss with the experts themselves, but these two weeks allowed us to live and experience Olympic values and sport diplomacy. Remember that one of our lecturers defined diplomacy as communication, representation, negotiation.

From the communication point of view on behalf of all the native English speakers we must applaud the non-native speakers who just spent two intense weeks discussing complex topics. This isn't easy! We salute you for that. From the

representation point of view, we all did our countries proud by how we have shared something from our homelands with each other. Lastly, our negotiation skills were certainly exercised with all the strategic discussions around what nights were best to visit Zorbas and how to convince friends to go on one day versus another.

You all received a question in the last 24 hours and were asked to summarise your time at this session. The slide behind me is our collective thoughts on this topic with common words appearing larger. Diversity, friendship, inspiration and amazing. There are reasons why we collectively chose these words and we should take time to think and appreciate why they were chosen.

Amazing

- It really is amazing how many snakes were seen in two weeks (four total) given Panos claims to have only seen three in his time here.
- It was amazing the number of injuries sustained in these two weeks; the Olympic spirit still burns inside our minds… if not our muscles.
- It is amazing the camaraderie our group showed to each other in Zorbas, to our injured teammates, to beginner players in different sports and to our wild dogs that followed us everywhere.

Diversity

- The cultural presentations we witnessed gave us a diverse view into the lives of our fellow participants.
- The group discussions provided us real-world examples from all the corners of the globe with which we were able to debate and process.
- The inspirational Olympian presentations provided a diverse perspective on the journeys to the games and experiences at the games we can undergo.
- The ability for us to sit down and have a meal with so many diverse people and learn so much from the face to face interactions.

Inspiring / Time – to – shine

- The lectures we attended set the stage for us all to take the bull by the horns upon our return home. We have all been equipped with the information required for us to shine in our chosen fields.
- All the lectures were inspirational, particularly those on the social inclusion of refugees, Olympic Movement soft power, the cultural Olympiad. These

resonated and inspired the participants.

- Lastly, we were inspired by the young change makers and how with a limited amount of funding they are making significant impacts in their communities through sport. They set the bar high for all of us to follow.

Oluseyi Smith from Canada spoke on behalf of the English-speaking participants.

Our wonderful coordinators in the last session asked us to think of our expectations before we arrived and if they were met. I am posing the same question with a twist; think of where you were (knowledge, inspiration, sport awareness etc.) before the session and where you are now. Some of us are more sunburnt, injured, sleep deprived than we were two weeks ago, but we also have more perspective. More perspective on each other's culture, sports, arts, the Olympic family, the power of sport diplomacy and how it works. This whole experience was well rounded. Greek culture, sport activities, art activities, thoughtful lectures; it has made us sound in body and mind. We have experienced the best of what the Olympics represent, exactly what de Coubertin would have wanted.

To conclude I would like to challenge each of my fellow participants to answer a question. What will you do in your lives when you go home, that you could *not* do two weeks ago to promote the Olympic ideals, the power of sport or sport diplomacy? I challenge you to think about this, write it down in your phones and set a recurring reminder. Every six months this question will pop up on your phones. What are you doing to make all what we have been told and experienced real in the real world? Every six months the question will pop up and the continuous improvement cycle will endure.

We are in a unique position – we can share our love and passion for the Olympics and sport with the world. Not everyone is able to experience what we have these past two weeks. It is up to us to be leaders and share within our communities, live our lives championing the Olympic values, and create/design practical solutions wherever we can. Good luck everyone – we can do it!

ADDRESS
on behalf of the Session's Coordinators
by Panos TRIKALIOTIS (GRE)

This is not a protocol speech, but it is one which comes from deep deep deep beneath.

From deep inside the heart, from deep inside the soul, it is honest, it is real and it talks on behalf of us all.

We thank the IOA President for the opportunity to come and live a magic story, one without dragons, princesses and kings, but with real people who believe in their dreams. To the Dean we say:

Panos Trikaliotis from Greece, head of the coordinators, addressed the participants on behalf of the coordinators.

"Thank you for showing us the way. Thank you for believing in us. Thank you for all the help, support, kindness and trust".

Dear lecturers: "Thank you for the patience, the sharing and the guidance. You all inspired us, motivated us and set the foundations for a future global sport alliance".

To the IOA staff who helped us a lot, we thank you for your time, your understanding and for being there for us at any cost.

Dear fellow coordinators, you gave us your best. You worked nonstop, for so many days, without getting enough rest.

Yet you performed. Yet you excelled. But most importantly you gave us this one thing which is the most important from anything else.

It is your soul and we really thank you for that, it upgraded our experience to levels so far apart.

And now comes the big deal. Dear participants: Thank you from deep inside our hearts.

You challenged us, you inspired us, you showed us a different world. A world of commitment, dedication and so much more.

You taught us new perspectives, new ideas, new ways and new paths, and you respected us, you listened to us and you befriended us with open hugs.

Your smiles, your vibes, your energy and laugh, we cherished them; we will remember them and the bridges in our hearts will never fall apart.

Sport diplomacy they said, but you are a trouble, a trouble I would very happily do again.

If there is one word I would describe this Session, it would be hope. Dear IOA and IOC please listen because the youth are here and they just spoke.

ADDRESS
on behalf of the Session's Lecturers
by Dr Benu GUPTA (IND)

It is my honour and privilege to be amongst you today for this momentous occasion when we come to the end of the 59th International Session for Young Participants 2019. As I present my concluding remarks on behalf of the lecturers, I look back at the two weeks spent here in Olympia, home away from home. The peace and tranquility that prevails here is next to none. The spiritual glory of the Ancient Olympic Games coupled by the hospitality at this Academy gives one the pleasure to always want to come back.

On behalf of the nine lecturers I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the International Olympic Academy Mr Kouvelos, the Director of the Academy Prof. Gangas and the Honorary Dean Prof. Georgiadis for working tirelessly towards assuring that the World Peace through Olympic Movement become a reality in everyone's life and for the tremendous effort in ensuring that the young participants live the code of Olympism especially the two weeks they were at the Academy, we salute you.

To the IOA staff, that is, the secretariat, the cooks the cleaners, security, the grounds people and of course the team of doctors, your dedication and commitment to the welfare of everyone in the Academy has made us feel like one big family. It is not easy to put a smile on 159 young participants from 85 different countries but you have done it with love and affection, we thank you.

It was amazing to see the dedication and coordination of 17 committed coordinators who left no stone unturned which made the thought and theme of the session into reality, keep it up.

Sport is a universal language that knows no barrier and this has been proved during our stay here in Olympia. To the young participants, your thought provoking discussions, presentations and questions give us hope and confidence that the future of sport is in safe hands and we thank you for the lively interactions.

Dr Benu Gupta from India addressed the participants on behalf of the lecturers.

The spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood, your thoughtfulness, your responsiveness, the commitment, the passion you showed should not end here in Olympia but should give you the drive to make the world a better place through versatile programmes in your countries.

In conclusion, this year's theme which was "Olympic Diplomacy and Peace" with special subject "Olympic Diplomacy: How can Olympic Sports play a positive role in International Diplomacy", coupled by the experience acquired here should be the stepping stone of using Olympism as a sustainable tool for world peace. As you leave this place, bear in mind that you are going to be sports diplomats of the Olympic ideals, values and peace in your respective countries, therefore be good envoys. We cannot always build the future for our youth but we can build our youth for the future; we have passed the torch to you and at any point of time you need any help we are there. Your group is one of the best ever groups of participants; contribute in making one Peaceful Global Family begin with the first step. Just remember: ASPIRE TO INSPIRE BEFORE YOU EXPIRE.

CLOSING ADDRESS
of the Session proceedings
by the President of the International Olympic Academy
Isidoros KOUVELOS

As we are coming to the end of this Session I would like to express our thanks for your constructive participation, each from their own position and with their corresponding role – the lecturers with their amazing speeches, the coordinators with their organisational role, the participants with their active and enthusiastic presence in all IOA activities and the IOA staff for their continued coordination and their thorough organisation of this Session.

As you now know, the Session for Young Participants is the oldest, longest lived, as well as most impactful Session of the IOA. Its existence dates back to the inception of the IOA. Its structure reflects exactly the vision that the pioneers of the International Olympic Academy had in mind, when planning the actions of this new educational body. The combination of lectures delivered by renowned scholars from all over the world, the discussions in working groups, the sporting and art activities, as well as the cultural exchanges during social evenings, make up the educational backbone of the Session.

And you experienced all of this, in a magical environment, just a few meters away from the soil on which athletes from ancient times participated in the Olympic Games.

You experienced it in a small Olympic Village devoid of the characteristics of competitive sports, but focusing completely on the harmonious co-existence of people from all points of the planet, whose point of reference was love of sports.

The impact of this Session, however, is due to something else, which is imperceptible and extremely strong: the dynamics that develop between people that will always be united by their participation in the IOA, in the form of relationships and life choices. Because the IOA is not simply another impersonal

educational organisation, it is its people and all those who participated in its proceedings and experienced Olympism – in its birthplace.

In the last two weeks you have achieved in Ancient Olympia what the Olympic Movement seeks to accomplish – and which also comprises the foundation of its edifice. The harmonious co-existence of peoples and individuals who get to know each other and to showcase their common characteristics.

At this point I would like to repeat the passage that you read on the stele of Pierre de Coubertin after the opening ceremony that refers to the texts that he himself has written:

> *To ask people to love one another is merely a form of childishness. To ask them to respect each other is not utopian, but in order to respect each other they must first know each other.*

We hope that you will agree that all of this does not sound simply idealistic and utopian. Indeed, without a vision, ideas, romanticism, our life would not be the same and it is precisely what distinguishes the youth, which you represent here today, as well as your duty to seek the deeper meaning of things and to always have this as a guiding principle in your life.

Dear friends,

The subject of this year's Session was topical and very thought provoking. It focused on the influence that the Olympic Movement may have on international political diplomacy.

Recent developments on the international political stage and the re-launching of peace talks between South and North Korea through the dynamic contribution of the IOC, which paved the way for more instrumental initiatives, permit us to use the term "Olympic Diplomacy" in similar interventions in the future. And this is an achievement, especially in these days, where political rivalry and tension in the sensitive region of Asia could very well have sparked an international war!

The lecturers unfolded the diverse aspects of Olympic diplomacy. I am certain that they provided valuable knowledge and fertile ground for further enquiry and we would like to warmly thank them for it. I would furthermore like to thank the coordinators for coordinating the activities, the participants who so enthusiastically engaged in the discussions and all the educational activities, whilst I would also like to extend my thanks to the Session's interpreters and our

associates and staff of the IOA for their systematic work that ensured once again the smooth conduct of this Session.

Here, the IOA has sown the seed of Olympic education. It has done so knowingly to further its vision for a better world. It is up to you now to convey the knowledge and emotions that you are taking with you and to become the best ambassadors of Olympism in your countries.

Know that, as you will remember the IOA and the experiences that it has offered you, the IOA and those who support it shall also fondly think of you, because you are special, light hearted and put forth your own individual views.

Official closing of the Session with the closing address by the IOA President and the Olympic anthem.

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ACADEMY – 2019 ACTIVITIES

Date	Subject	Number of Participants
15-17 February	1st Olympia Forum	≈ 200
28-29 February	World School Sport Educational Games	≈ 100
3 April	Visit from the Gladsaxe gymnasium from Denmark	25 students and 2 teachers
5-7 April	2nd High School of Athens	47 students and 3 teachers
11-14 April	World Cultural Heritage Youth Symposium 2019	160 participants and 20 organisers
11-12 April	5th Thematic Seminar of CREADIS3 –Interreg Europe	≈ 50
14 April	Day visit from the 15th High School of Larisa	46 students and 4 teachers
18 April	Day visit by the 49th Primary School of Patras	40 students and 3 teachers
8-30 May	**26th International Seminar on Olympic Studies for Postgraduate Students**	**25 students and 8 professors**
9 May	Day visit by the University of Western Ontario, Canada	23 students and one professor
10 May	Day visit from the High School of Platania	19 students and two teachers
10-17 May	**15th International Session for NOA Directors and Chinese Academy representatives**	**≈ 140**
15 May	American Sport Management Students visit	16 students, 3 professors, 1 accompanying agent
17-19 May	Pan-Hellenic 5x5 Football Championship of High Schools – Hellenic Football Federation	100
17 May	American Sport Management Students visit	18 students, 2 professors, 1 accompanying agent
19-23 May	**1st NOCs Culture and Education Champions General Assembly**	**105 representatives**

Date	Subject	Number of Participants
22-26 May	Educational visit from Fullerton University	26 students 3 professors
27 May	Slovak Olympic and Sports Committee	78 representatives
1-15 June	**59th International Session for Young Participants**	**≈ 200**
4 June	Visit from Georges Politzer school	10
17-22 June	IOAPA Session	≈ 40
24-25 June	International Symposium: "Becoming an Olympic Athlete without Doping"	60-70
24 June – 14 July	**Master of Arts in Sports Ethics and Integrity (MAiSI)**	**≈ 55**
28 June – 1 July	Pan-Hellenic Union of Sport Press	≈ 100
1-7 July	**13th International Session for Educators of Higher Institutes of Physical Education**	**≈ 80**
9-11 July	Courtesy visit by the CISM, Colonel Dorah Mamby Koita, Colonel Luiz Fernando Nobrega and Lieutenant Colonel Rafael Pinheiro	5
10-14 July	**8th International Scholars' Symposium "Sports, Society, and Culture"**	≈ 90
19-21 July	Beach Volleyball Championships- Olympia Masters	≈ 80
1 September	Opening Ceremony of the German Olympic Academy Meeting	≈ 100
12 September – 16 November	**1st semester of the Master's Degree Programme of the IOA in cooperation with the University of Peloponnese "Olympic Studies, Olympic Education and Organisation and Management of Olympic Events"**	**≈ 50**
4-6 October, 11-13 October	Athens College, Hellenic-American Educational Foundation	160 students and 20 teachers in total
14-16 October	Visit of three schools from Greece, France and Spain in the context of ERASMUS+ ENJOY programme	63
18-20 October	Visit of the winners of the Olympic Culture and Education Programme in the context of Baku 2019 EYOF organised by the NOC of Azerbaijan	27

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