

**International Conference: Sport, youth inclusion and violence prevention
Fight for Peace & UNESCO
Biblioteca Parque do Estado, Rio de Janeiro: 5 May 2016**

In the year of the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Fight for Peace joined forces with UNESCO in Brazil to bring together different actors – representatives of grassroots community organisations, law enforcement, government, and international agencies – to discuss and identify the benefits and challenges of using sport as tool for social inclusion and violence prevention amongst youth.

Opening Remarks:

*Marlova Jovchelovitch Noletto, Programme director, UNESCO in Brazil
Luke Dowdney, Founder and director, Fight for Peace*

Fight for Peace founder Luke Dowdney, opened the conference reminding us that in the 1980s and 1990s sports were seen as an activity, not a tool for social change. Fight for Peace began in 2000 and grew along with the sports for development movement, as it has become increasingly sophisticated in methodology and able to demonstrate social impact through both qualitative and quantitative indicators. The aim of the conference is to: highlight where we have been successful in using sports as a tool for violence reduction amongst youth; identify where we have faced challenges, limitations of sport and difficulties in the past; and discuss where we as practitioners in the field see the movement heading in order to make recommendations for the future.

Marlova Jovchelovitch highlighted that access to sport is a human right, and that sport has the power to empower and transform young people. Sport can help even the most violent, vulnerable young people understand and follow rules. Marlova also reminded us that poor young people, especially young black males, are disproportionately high victims of violence in Brazil.

1) Sport on the frontline: Grassroots community projects share knowledge and experiences.

Mediator: Marielle Franco, Rio de Janeiro State Legislative Assembly Human Rights Commission (ALERJ)

Panellists: Marcellus Baz, Founder, Switch Up (Nottingham, UK), Beatriz Mejia, Director, Grupo Internacional de Paz (Medellín, Colombia), Ana Caroline Belo, Project Coordinator, Fight for Peace (Rio, Brazil), Joana Miraglia, Executive Manager, Instituto Reação (Rio, Brazil).

Objective: To share experiences and identify key recommendations for practitioners wanting to implement sport programmes as a tool for social inclusion and violence prevention amongst young people.

Marielle Franco, who was born and brought up in Maré, mediated the discussion. She asked panellists two questions: “How can sport be an effective tool for violence

prevention amongst young people?” and “What are your recommendations for community based practitioners wanting to include sports programmes as a tool for violence prevention?”.

Recommendations:

For sport to not simply be used as a free time activity in contexts of violence, but to be used to try to address the motivations which cause young people to be violent.

For organisations to create a network of support for young people, involving multiple agencies, and always keep the door open for them.

For organisations to employ multi-disciplinary, well-trained staff who understand and believe in the organisation’s goals.

Key for organisations to gain legitimacy is to engage and listen to the community, and adapt programmes in response.

Themes that recurred throughout the discussion included: the importance of multi agency networking; employability / “job-readiness” and the need for political formation.

1. How can sport be an effective tool for violence prevention amongst young people?

Marcellus Baz: Came from a background of deprivation, violence and became caught in a circle of crime. Sees similarities between Brazil and England, with lives lost – died, or lost in prison – and young people unable to find jobs. Boxing gave him discipline, feeling good, getting a ‘well done’ pat on the back for the first time in life. Values from boxing can pass over to day-to-day life, helping young people to vent anger and providing positive role models. He has founded two organisations, one working with boxing only and one with wrap around support.

Beatriz Mejia: Sport is as natural as narco-trafico is in some communities, and so it’s an easy/natural way to engage with young people. Sport in this context cannot just be a free-time activity, because violence and drug-dealing is such a part of the whole context, in schools and in family, not just in the streets. GIP works to permeate dynamics of community and family and aims to treat young people as “*all-round human beings*”.

Joana Miraglia: We don’t want to form just any athlete. We want to form developed athletes who are responsible and involved people, with values. Key is to help YP grow skills and self-confidence. To do this, sport must be combined with other areas like education and social assistance.

Ana Caroline Belo: Sport allows for young people to be recognised in the community in other ways, not for holding a gun, but for holding up gloves or putting on a kimono.

2. What are your recommendations for community based practitioners wanting to include sports programmes as a tool for violence prevention?

Marcellus Baz: Emphasised the need to always be consistent, open, transparent, honest and patient, because these are young people who have been constantly let-down. To teach young people simple life skills, like timekeeping, and provide continuity and be there when they need you – keep the door open for those who might not be ready. Creating a network of support is also fundamental (hospitals/social support).

Beatriz Mejia: Challenge is to denaturalize crime and violence, and make people feel uncomfortable with it; cultivate a critical sense. They need to be helped to respond to external threats like guns, drugs, dirty money. We're not going to take them out of conflict from one day to the next, it's about sewing a seed in their heads, trying to show them that other realities exist. "There is no use treating the leaves on a tree – you have to get to the roots", and discover what is motivating violence. Sport reaches some of those necessities, but cannot reach all.

Joana Miraglia: Coaches must understand that there are wider things to do with young people's development and growth that go along with the sport. To make a change, staff have to be multi-disciplinary, well trained professionals who are committed to goals of the organisation. If we have lots of small projects, in several areas, all doing a small bit well, then maybe we can encourage and drive public policies.

Ana Caroline Belo: Fight for Peace grew with the participation of young people. It's essential to listen to them, to be flexible to change and to adapt programmes in response – legitimacy in the community is key. She emphasised the importance of blending sport with citizenship, to encourage them to have a different view of the community, to learn respect and how to interact with others, to believe that they are able to change their reality.

3. Questions from the mediator and audience.

Questions asked:

- how organisations achieved/encouraged employability and political learning
- how to go about multi-agency networking

Marcellus: Multi-agency working - established relationships with social services, police, schools. Coaches/mentors need to see signs/symptoms and be the bridge between young people and establishment, to ensure 'system' doesn't let them down.

Employment: we need to get young people job-ready. It's easy to get them into jobs which they can't sustain. So they need training to go through processes of being job-ready, learning time-keeping, making eye contact, how to behave, helping them know what to expect, so they're more likely to be able to keep the job. Political awareness is really important because young people need to understand the power of the vote. They bring in local politicians to talk about local elections and national elections, and how young people can influence their own environment.

Ana Carolina: Political awareness - we work on this through the youth council, through the form they're elected and structured, and also through citizenship, debate and constructing ideas together. Employability: courses that respond to young people's

interests, and by holding an employability fair which serves not only young people but the community in general, bringing in partners to Maré.

2) Peace-building and youth inclusion: can law enforcement and local government programmes use sport for promoting peace?

Objective: to identify how sport can be used strategically and at scale for the prevention of violence.

Recommendations:

For civil society and public security authorities to find ways to sit down and come up with solutions together.

For society not to over-estimate the power of sports to transform – they have to be used as part of a solution.

For cities with high homicide rates to consider using a range of quick, simple and creative solutions to make them more integrated and reduce violence.

Mediator: Beto Chaves, Inspector, Civil Police (Rio, Brazil)

Panellists: Camila Escobar, Head of Planning, Inder Sports and Recreation Institute (Medellín, Colombia); Nason Buchanan, Regional Program Manager, Mayoral Gang Prevention Unit (LA, USA); Thomas Abt, Harvard University (Boston, USA); Leriana Figueiredo, Superintendent of Prevention, Public Security Secretariat, Rio de Janeiro State Government (Brazil)

Beto Chaves, a civil police inspector from Rio de Janeiro and director of the successful 'Papo de Resposta' youth outreach programme, opened by remarking that one of the main reasons we have violence in the world is because of "walls put up by ourselves". He said that for there to be peaceful coexistence we need to change the way we think. He then asked the panel two questions:

1. What are your programme's key objectives for engaging young people and building peace?

Nason: In LA, the mayor's office has implemented a global approach to gang violence prevention, from spotting warning signs to engaging with imprisoned gang members to using ex-gang members as advisors. They use a 4 part strategy: (I) CEC – service providers go into local schools and give presentations on free services available. Includes gun buy-back once a year, trade in gun for gift card for local stores, and guns are melted down and made into art. (II) Preventative services – for 10-15 year olds, assessing 9 risk factors for receiving family case-management. (III) Gang intervention – working with young people already in gangs, lots from multi-generational gangs, assessing how embedded the people are in gang life. They also work with young people for 90 days before they're let out of youth detention. With gang members who don't want to be part of the programme, they still help them with documentation, etc. (IV)

Response – he goes to homicide scenes and organises partnership meetings with gang members and police together. They're not solving crimes, but helping police spot trends and their mission is stopping retaliation.

Leriana: It is rare to get public policy which has young people as focus, it is usually young people "in focus". Preventative programmes supporting young people cannot only come from the police; other actors must be engaged as well. A big part of the challenge is getting multi-sector actors to sit down with public security officials to construct something together.

Thomas: Focus in USA is using research and data to make better decisions, identifying hotspots and tendencies.

Camila: In 2004 INDER went into areas in Medellin with lowest levels of "life-quality", where state presence was scarce. INDER was seen as a credible presence, and being able to generate confidence is key. Developing countries struggle to believe they can change things. But through quick, simple and creative solutions (such as an escalator connecting city and favela) Medellin has showed it is possible.

2. How can sport have a meaningful impact in this process?

Nason: They use data to identify crime hotspots and during summer run a programme called Summer Night Lights, which occupies neighbourhood parks between 7-12pm (when most crime happens), putting on free activities and encouraging gang members to get involved. Sport is an important part of the programme – softball, basketball and football leagues.

Leriana: When you have the police entering a territory, and resistance from both sides, how do you construct new realities and relationships? One tool was using sports, and a big part of that combat sports, so that police could structure and continue their approaches in trying to build relationships with young people, particularly with those that had not got involved with other social actions. They're working in 38 communities, average of 6,000 kids and teenagers per month. One example is in Morro dos Prazeres, started as a police programme, and the project has now been taken over by the community

Thomas: Sport can help individuals and communities, but we can't become "sports evangelists". Sports can also promote negative values, and there is no evidence to suggest that sports on their own improve communities. We need to be realistic about what can and can't be achieved with sports, in a broader process. We should use sport to engage, then follow up with evidence-based practices: (I) Positive social attachment: high quality, intense adult connection. (II) Change in way of thinking (via CBT programmes): if mindset doesn't change, young people will not be able to take advantage of opportunities. (III) Have to work with hard-to-reach young people: small group of people are responsible for most of the violence. This is where boxing and martial arts is an advantage – it has a special attraction for this group.

Camila: Sport can be one of this range of simple solutions, but must be part of a broader process.

3. Questions from the mediator and audience.

Questions asked:

- How other countries deal with YP being put in prison as treatment and punishment
- Issue of good work by organisations not being able to affect public policy
- Impact of the preference for fighting sports on gender issues and gender-based violence
- How to deal with trafficking of guns in US

Nason: In LA they are fortunate to have a mayor who understands prevention services, and they focus on “re-entry” – to assist people in prison returning to society. They are currently working out a deal with corporations to provide 1000 jobs in 3 years to ex-offenders. Guns: gun laws are very strict in LA, but still many prefer the risk of being armed than unarmed.

Leriana: Public Policy: believes that there exists possibility of influencing public policy, maybe not yet very structured or solid, but that events like this can increase visibility of the debate. We shouldn't miss the opportunity of it being the Olympic year to bring focus to the issue.

Thomas: In Latin America, people tend to be over-punished and under-convicted – we need to find the “right type of punishment” and gain public support for this. Guns: Gun control debate is good, but shouldn't be the only question. We need to think of how to make sure that guns are not in the hands of young men on Friday night when they're drinking with their friends – that's achievable public policy.

3) Sport for peace and development: where next?

Objective: To discuss and identify future trends, strategies and risks when using sport for human development.

Mediator: Flávio Canto, Founder, Instituto Reação and presenter TV Globo

Panellists: Luke Dowdney, Founder, Fight for Peace; Fabio Eon, Deputy Coordinator of Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO in Brazil; Vanderson Berbat, General Manager of Education, Rio 2016 (Rio, Brazil); Fabiana Gorenstein, Child Protection Programme, UNICEF; Louise Bezerra, Sport for Social Change Network – REMS (Brazil); Ricardo Vidal, Atletas pelo Brasil.

Recommendations:

For Brazil to invest more in sports, particularly in exposing children to a wider variety of sports from an early age.

Sport for Development institutions must also become better organised, using indicators, strengthening M&E, and becoming more transparent.

Flávio opened by stating that athletes have a responsibility to inspire young people through values like determination, discipline and responsibility. He then posed the following questions for the panel:

1. How does your organisation use sport for peace and development?

Luke: It's not just what Fight for Peace does, but how we do it: we create a self-enforcing culture, in which a physical space like a sports academy becomes really important because it reinforces a culture of peace and respect, and this is then reinforced by the young people taking part. The beauty of boxing and martial arts is that you can be a peaceful person, but strong, and this is part of the culture too. FFP has three focuses: (I) Communitarian: using the example of Ana Carolina, creating the methodology together with our young people and community. (II) Creation of Global Alumni Network: instead of competing with organisations with the same aim all fighting for resources, FFP decided to share methodology and build a network of local partners all over the world. (III) Next step was more strategic, to help join those small organisations with few resources to big organisations with M&E systems etc. For this reason FFP opened a Jamaica office, to create strategic programmes with local partners from all stakeholder groups (public policy, international agencies, community partners, business community) via a collective impact approach. This programme, known as the Safer Community Incubator, will also be opening in South Africa this year.

Ricardo: One of the best things Atletas do Brasil has done is to ensure more transparency in the way sports organisations are run, ensuring there are regular leadership changes in federations, for example.

Vanderson: Since Sydney Olympics, the Olympic programme has had to involve an educational aspect. Rio has decided to build capacity of 25,000 P.E. teachers in 10,000 schools all over Brazil, because teachers have enormous potential to influence. Limited sports are taught in Brazil because teachers don't know about them – the Rio 2016 programme gave teachers intensive 3 hour training sessions to learn the basics of a new sport. When a child learns a new sport, there is no bullying because nobody is an expert.

Fábio: UNESCO has, since 1978, recognised Sport as a Human Right, and has a vision of Sport interlinked with Culture, and supports Tribal Games facing extinction, for example. Last year UNESCO revisited 1978 documents, updating them, and adding Gender and Disability to ways sport can make social transformations. We need to think of long lasting permanent policies, not just a discussion when the Olympics are on. These policies must represent all classes, races and genders.

2. Pushing the agenda forwards, how do you see future trends, strategies and risks when using sport for human development?

Luke: In lots of communities around the world there is an individual coach working with local young people often without any substantive support. These people do not have the structure or resources of a big organisation, and never will. But they have a

crucial connection with the community, so we need to invest in them to create spaces of tolerance and respect. We also need to become bigger protagonists in the sport as a tool for violence prevention debate, improve the monitoring, evaluation and learning process in community based programmes. There is also an inconsistency in behaviours and values in some sports agencies compared with the values and behaviours that sport for development aims to teach – staff working in these federations need to demonstrate the values they are supposed to be upholding. Finally, we need to start to understand that elite sport and sport for development can take place on the same programme and are not mutually exclusive, as our young people at Fight for Peace have consistently demonstrated by becoming champions in the ring and/or champions in life.

Ricardo: Brazil has the capacity to completely stop to watch sport but the country needs to learn to consume sport actively. There also needs to be much more investment: 37% of municipal areas in Brazil don't have a budget for sport.

Vanderson: Sport should be obligatory in formative years of education, because it teaches motor skills, as well as so many other things. More sports must be taught in Brazil, and capacity building is the cheapest, most efficient way to change things – not building new gyms, new infrastructure.

Fábio: We need to break the logic of cyclical policies in Brazil – we need to have consistent public policies that remain regardless of political changes.

Louise: Dream is to have government sports programmes with indicators, transparency, public financial reports – this is not a reality at the moment, and the system is set up so that money disappears. 1% of state budget in São Paulo goes to sports, and they don't even know how much equipment/teachers they have.