Acknowledgments

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We are thankful for the significant input provided by colleagues from technical sections in headquarters, regional offices, country offices, and National Committees.

Deep gratitude goes to Claudia Rader and Genine Babakian for their significant contributions in the drafting and editing of this document. We are also grateful to Katherine Wepplo and Stephen Hammer for peer review and editing, Amy Farkas, Mary Tangelder and Kylie Bates for their support with research.

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Design: Suazion, Inc.
UNICEF has been a pioneer in the use of sport as a tool for development, and has a long history of promoting every child’s right to play. We have all seen the joy in children’s eyes when they are running and playing. And we have witnessed the self-satisfaction and confidence in children’s body language when they excel at playing a sport well.

Working in partnership with civil society, UNICEF is leveraging the exceptional power of sport to improve the lives of children around the world. Today we are working with a broad range of sport organizations and networks, athletes, governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and UN agencies to reduce inequities and promote everything from life skills and immunization to conflict prevention and gender equality through sport.

The Civil Society Partnerships Section of the Programme Division, NYHQ developed this Guide to Sport for Development (S4D) to assist regional and country offices and headquarters to magnify the impact of their S4D work. This first-ever S4D guide explores ways of integrating sport across all UNICEF focus areas by harnessing the passion we see on the playing fields. The guide features positive examples of S4D in action that can be adapted within any country context to promote sport that is safe, inclusive and accessible, regardless of ability, gender, race or ethnic background, or social or economic status. This resource builds on the Strategic Framework on Sport for Development, which is highly recommended as a key reference for all S4D practitioners.

The world of sport represents enormous untapped potential for UNICEF. Harnessing the global appeal and power of sport presents challenges and opportunities, requiring UNICEF to explore relationships beyond its traditional partners. We hope this resource can help UNICEF colleagues navigate these challenges to discover and develop tremendous opportunities to use sport to reduce the inequities that negatively impact children and promote social change.

Nicholas Alipui
Director of Programmes
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *UNICEF Guide to Sport for Development* is designed to help UNICEF use sport and play to promote children’s rights and well-being. Produced by the Civil Society Partnerships Section of the Programme Division, the *Guide* is intended to assist UNICEF country offices, regional offices, and headquarters to incorporate “Sport for Development” (S4D) into their overall programming.

The *Guide* is intended to:

- Highlight how Sport for Development can support UNICEF’s organizational priorities and advance progress, with equity, towards the Millennium Development Goals and a post-2015 world fit for children.
- Guide discussion, planning and action for the application of a rights-based approach to using sport and play for development, including applying principles of gender equality, inclusion and child and adolescent participation.
- Provide guidance on how to use Sport for Development as well as partnerships with sport organizations to enhance UNICEF-supported programmes.
- Offer recommendations on how to effectively leverage major sporting events, work with sport celebrities and mobilize resources in collaboration with sport partners.
- Lay out key principles and examples to illustrate the value of Sport for Development as an overarching approach; these can then be adapted to and utilized within specific contexts and programming needs.

This guide is intended to assist UNICEF country offices, regional offices, and headquarters to incorporate “Sport for Development” (S4D) into their overall programming.
Lwazi balances a football on his back in Estcourt, a town in South Africa’s KwaZulu-Natal Province. The photograph was taken by Mvelo Manana, 16, one of 20 participants in a UNICEF-organized child photography workshop. The participants came from two local schools, where their motto is ‘education is freedom.’ Many participants have been affected by HIV/AIDS; some are orphans, and most live in poverty. ©UNICEF/NYHQ2010-0530/MVELO MANANA
INTRODUCTION TO SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT
1.1 What is Sport for Development?

As the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) draws near, the international community can celebrate many accomplishments that have widely benefited children and young people. Yet many targets remain elusive, and emerging and neglected issues must be addressed in the post-2015 development agenda to ensure a world fit for children. To craft a bold response in the run up to the deadline of the MDGs, UNICEF – together with civil society, government and private sector partners – has launched global initiatives such as A Promise Renewed to end preventable child deaths; Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) to reverse child stunting, hunger and poverty; and the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities. Major campaigns are also underway to support the eradication of polio, and prevent new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths. In order to make the most of these and other key initiatives for children, there is a growing recognition that new and innovative strategies are needed, such as harnessing the power of sport to meet the needs of children around the world.

“Sport for Development” (S4D) is the use of sport, recreation and play1 as a tool to achieve specific development outcomes. For UNICEF, sport is defined as “all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. These include: play; recreation; organized, casual or competitive sport; and indigenous sports and games.”2 Play is a children’s right in and of itself, yet the Sport for Development approach leverages the inherent benefits of sport, recreation and play not only to fulfil this right, but to achieve broader social and economic development outcomes for participants, spectators, and their communities at the local, national and global levels. To effectively realize the potential of a Sport for Development approach, programming must be inclusive and accessible to all participants, regardless of ability, sex, racial or ethnic background; or social or economic status.

UNICEF has a long history of promoting the right to play and partnering with the world of sport. Today, as poverty levels rise, resulting in broader disparities between wealthy and poor families, UNICEF is placing more emphasis on integrating sport and play within country programmes to enable disadvantaged and excluded children to develop a healthy lifestyle and integrate them within their communities. In this way, UNICEF is using S4D to help achieve progress in all of the Mid-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) Focus Areas: young child survival and development; basic education and gender equality; HIV and AIDS prevention,
treatment, care and support; child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse; and policy advocacy and partnerships for children’s rights.

Sport for Development will be equally relevant as a programming tool in the future, more particularly, in the next 2014–2017 MTSP. UNICEF also recognizes the instrumental role that sport and play contributes to supporting children in humanitarian emergencies. The universal appeal of sport makes it an ideal tool to extend UNICEF’s work to the hardest-to-reach populations, helping UNICEF in its mission of achieving the MDGs with equity and paving the way towards a post-2015 world fit for children.

The nature of the S4D approach is based on partnerships. To fully harness the power of sport to benefit children, UNICEF engages a wide range of actors, including governments, civil society, the private sector, celebrities, children and adolescents.

1.2 Why Sport for Development?

UNICEF promotes sport and play because they are fundamental rights of all children, as expressed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. But sport is also a low-cost, high-impact programming tool that can help achieve other rights and development goals, such as:

- Promoting equity;
- Setting the foundation for healthy child development;
- Increasing children’s participation;
- Reintegrating communities in post-conflict settings;
- Building supportive environments to develop healthy behaviour;
- Promoting learning through play and recreation and helping to develop positive attitudes towards diversity;
- Assisting in advocacy, brand-building and fundraising.

Sport and play are a child’s rights

UNICEF’s work with sport is grounded in its mission to ensure that every child has the right to play and to enjoy recreation and sport in a safe and healthy environment – a right founded in article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as well as in numerous other international treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
Still, many countries do not prioritize children’s right to play. In many poor or restrictive societies, girls are doubly disadvantaged, restricted by social norms and the time-consuming demands of household chores. Yet the CRC recognizes “the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities … and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.” By ratifying the CRC, States agree that they will “encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.”

Through Sport for Development initiatives, UNICEF and partners can contribute to the promotion of numerous other rights for children, including:
- The right to survival, development and the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
- The right to a legally registered name and nationality.
- The right to education directed at the fullest development of their personality and mental and physical abilities.
- The right to freedom of expression and participation in cultural life.
- The right of girls and women to take part in sport, recreation and all forms of economic and social life on an equal basis with men.
- The right of children with disabilities to participate in recreation and sport on an equal basis with others.
- The right of children to participate in decision-making on issues that affect them.
- The right of children to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation.

### Sport promotes equity

In recent years it has become increasingly clear that achieving the MDGs is dependent upon addressing the needs of the poorest and most marginalized communities within countries. For UNICEF, strengthening the focus on achieving greater equity for children is both imperative and appropriate.

The global appeal of sports allows UNICEF to use this cost-effective tool to expand its reach to advance the well-being of children in the most deprived populations. Sport can help UNICEF reach across boundaries created by poverty, gender and geographic location – three factors that have a strong impact on a child’s chances of being registered at birth, surviving the first years of life, having access to primary health care and attending school.

Sport-related actors and activities can address issues of equity by promoting inclusion, breaking down entrenched attitudes and social norms, and changing the way marginalized children – particularly girls and children with disabilities – are viewed and valued by their own communities.

### Sport sets the foundation for healthy child development

As children develop through childhood and adolescence, sport can play an important role in fostering social inclusion, improving physical and mental health, increasing self-esteem and encouraging better academic performance.
Sport can teach children and young people basic values and life skills – discipline, teamwork, fairness, tolerance and respect for others – that shape their behaviour and help them to pursue their goals. In addition, sport can teach the importance of physical fitness, good diet and how to make choices that positively impact health and well-being. Sport also gives children the opportunity to have fun!

The table below, adapted from a manual for sport facilitators produced by the Swiss Academy for Development, outlines a variety of benefits that sport can have on a child’s healthy development.

Sport is a means to increase children’s participation

Sport is an important channel for reaching out to and including children and young people in their own development. It can teach them to become active participants in decision-making and express their own views freely; it can help them build self-esteem and acquire key life skills – such as conflict resolution and communication – that will help them advocate on their own behalf.

Sport not only provides the opportunity for children to participate in creating sport and play programmes themselves, but also to engage in the planning and delivery of S4D activities. In Herat, Afghanistan, for example, a girls’ sports forum has been set up to give girls from 20 high schools the chance to play volleyball and basketball, while providing a platform for them to openly debate the cultural and social challenges they face as girls in one of the most traditional societies in the world. (See box in section 3.1)

Section 3.3 provides more information on the benefits of increasing children’s and young people’s participation through sport.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSIONS OF SPORT AND PLAY</th>
<th>BENEFITS TO THE CHILD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHYSICAL</strong></td>
<td>Flexibility, strength, endurance, resistance, speed, coordination (orientation, reaction, differentiation, rhythm, balance).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport and play activities stimulate movement and help to develop physical abilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MENTAL</strong></td>
<td>Ability to concentrate, to observe, to reflect, to anticipate. Ability to think logically, to put strategies in place, to make decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport and play activities help to develop intellectual capacities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMOTIONAL</strong></td>
<td>Learning to cope with fears and frustrations. Learning to manage aggression. Experiencing joy, fun and motivation. Learning to win and to lose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport and play activities improve awareness and management of emotions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL</strong></td>
<td>Making friends. Gaining trust, empathy, respect and tolerance for others. Surrendering stereotypes and prejudices. Learning to cooperate, to manage conflicts, to obey rules and to act within a team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport and play activities help to strengthen social relations and to improve social skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sport can help build supportive environments to change behaviour

Sport can serve as a powerful social convener, bringing together large and diverse crowds of people. The social aspects of sport, including regular interaction amongst children, their peers and adults, make it a good environment in which to convey messages that influence behaviour and social norms. Sport can help teach decision-making skills, build self-esteem and personal responsibility, and, by extension, equip children to make positive choices in other areas of their lives. It can also provide a safe and supportive environment for dialogue with trusted adults about sensitive issues such as HIV and AIDS prevention and education, family conflict and inter-personal challenges.

Sport events and leagues can assemble participants, volunteers, spectators, officials and coaches from diverse groups, including communities from different ethnic, cultural, linguistic, socio-economic and political backgrounds.

Major sport events, by virtue of their ability to attract huge viewership and national and global media, also offer significant opportunities for Communication for Development (C4D). High-profile athletes can also be valuable C4D assets and serve as role models, ambassadors and spokespersons to convey key UNICEF messages. (Section 4.2 contains more information on UNICEF’s work with sport celebrities.) Major sport events can also attract a broad range of donors, agencies, sponsors and networks that would not normally have a relationship with UNICEF. These groups include sports federations, leagues and clubs, governments, private sector companies and the sports media. (See section 4.1 for more information on leveraging major sport events.)

Sport can be a low-cost and high-impact programming tool

Many sport activities require few resources, relying upon basic equipment that is often locally available. Sports, such as football, that require only a ball and a field, provide low-cost and high-impact opportunities to reach large numbers of children in communities that have limited resources to carry out development programmes. Even as communities begin to produce more sophisticated sports events and tournaments, the overall cost can still be relatively low in relation to the broader impact these activities have on children and community participants.
Sport can assist in advocacy, brand-building and fundraising

Sport partnerships and events provide a valuable advocacy platform for UNICEF to address key social and economic policy issues affecting children. UNICEF has experience at the national, regional and global level working with governments and civil society organizations to promote policies that: ensure that children enjoy their right to play; include sport as part of the core curriculum in schools; promote equal participation of girls; and guarantee that children are protected against violence. (See section 2.6 for a discussion of sport as a tool for policy advocacy.)

Sport partnerships with multimillion dollar brands like Futbol Club Barcelona, Manchester United and the International Olympic Committee allow UNICEF to build its visibility and brand value. From a fundraising perspective, over the past decade UNICEF has nurtured the most valuable portfolio of relationships within the sports industry of any children’s agency in the world. There are multiple opportunities for direct fundraising through association with sport-related foundations, leagues, individuals and events.

1.3 Background on Sport for Development

UNICEF has been a pioneer in the use of sport as a tool for addressing development issues. At the national level, UNICEF works with governments, ministries of sport, youth and education, and civil society organizations to promote policies that support, among other things, the right to play, the inclusion of sport in education, and the importance of protecting children against violence.

At the regional level, UNICEF uses sport tournaments, such as the Asia Cricket Cup, to focus on issues that are critical to the region’s children, such as girls’ education, proper nutrition and safe sanitation. A partnership between UNICEF and the Asian Cricket Council, for example, resulted in several major events supporting girls’ education in South Asia, as well as other activities under the Cricket’s Healthy Hat-Trick initiative to promote healthy nutrition and sanitation practices, as well as schooling for girls. UNICEF also works at the global level through initiatives such as “Think Wise,” the Global Cricket AIDS Partnership, which uses World Cup cricketers as role models to fight stigma and mobilize broad support for children and young people affected by HIV.

Only a decade ago, UNICEF was one of just a handful of organizations to use Sport for Development. Today, UNICEF is a leader in S4D, and maintains innovative partnerships and collaborative relationships with a broad range of sport organizations and networks, athletes, governments and UN agencies.

In 2008, Right to Play, in its capacity as the Secretariat of the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, produced a key resource for using S4D: “Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Governments.” The book is the result of Right to Play’s extensive coordination with 35 governments, 40 NGOs and countless stakeholders from UN agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector.

“Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace” increases awareness amongst governments about the potential of sport, and provides government policy-makers with a solid foundation on which to build their own policies, programmes and initiatives.

The world of sport presents a natural partnership for the United Nations system. By its very nature sport is about participation. It is about inclusion and citizenship.

Ilaria Favero, UN Interagency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace

UNICEF publishes Sport, Recreation and Play, outlining how the agency incorporates the power and potential of sport, recreation and play to mobilize governments to develop comprehensive strategies to fulfil every child’s right to play.

The International Year for Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE) is launched, inviting governments and the United Nations “to include sport and physical education as a tool towards achieving the MDGs and the broader aims of development and peace.”

The Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, an informal group of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York, is established. It serves as a platform to promote dialogue and encourage UN Member States and the UN system to integrate sport actively into their policies and strategies.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations convenes the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace to promote a more systematic and coherent use of sport in development and peace activities, and to generate greater support for such activities among governments and sport-related organizations. The task force is co-chaired by the then-Executive Director of UNICEF.

UN General Assembly adopts a resolution on the role of sport as a means to promote health, education, development and peace.

Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG) is launched at the Athens Summer Olympic Games. The aim of this inter-governmental policy initiative is to promote the integration of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) policy recommendations into the national and international development strategies of national governments.

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Futbol Club Barcelona (FCB) and UNICEF kick off a global partnership to benefit children in the developing world. As a part of its commitment to supporting UNICEF’s work, the sporting club features the UNICEF logo on the front of its jersey, the first time in the club’s 107 year history that a logo had been featured. FCB agrees to donate at least $1.5 million per year to UNICEF over a five-year period to support UNICEF programmes for children all over the world.

David Beckham, world renowned football superstar, named UNICEF International Goodwill Ambassador.
For the first time in history, the winning bid to host the 2012 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games includes a pledge to use the events to inspire millions of people to take up sport and physical activity. London uses the 2012 Olympics as a platform for launching International Inspiration, a global sport for development programme with UNICEF UK as a main partner.

Right to Play, in its capacity as the Secretariat of the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, produces “Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Governments,” a collaboration involving 35 governments, 40 NGOs and countless stakeholders from UN entities, civil society organizations and the private sector.

UNICEF, UNAIDS and the International Cricket Council (ICC) create the global partnership known as Think Wise to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS, building upon several years of collaboration.

Lionel Messi, Futbol Club Barcelona and Argentine national team soccer star, named UNICEF International Goodwill Ambassador.

Tennis superstar Serena Williams, winner of four U.S. Open championships and 15 Grand Slam titles, named UNICEF International Goodwill Ambassador.

Novak Djokovic, the world’s number-one ranked tennis player, becomes a UNICEF National Ambassador for his native Serbia.

UNICEF and Special Olympics sign a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen their joint commitment to uphold the rights, dignity and inclusion of children with disabilities.

The Flamengo Sports Club of Brazil seeks UNICEF’s support to form a partnership that protects and promotes the rights of each child and adolescent through safe and inclusive sports. The Flamengo jersey sports the UNICEF logo.

Futbol Club Barcelona renews their partnership with UNICEF in support of education and Sport for Development.

Golfer and Ambassador for UNICEF Ireland Rory McIlroy unveils his new golf bag featuring the UNICEF logo.
Children skip rope at a UNICEF-supported temporary learning centre in the flood-affected village of Fakir Jo Ghot, Pakistan’s Sindh Province. The flooding, which began in mid-July 2010, affected 20 million people, half of them children. ©UNICEF/NYHQ2011-0126/SHEHZAD NOORANI
USING SPORT AS A TOOL TO FURTHER UNICEF GOALS
2.1 Child Survival and Development

Rising child survival rates in recent decades reflect remarkable progress, but there are still too many children around the world who do not live past their fifth birthday. In keeping with UNICEF’s equity approach, the children’s agency has intensified efforts to reach the most marginalized populations through global initiatives like A Promise Renewed, to end preventable child deaths, and Scaling Up Nutrition.

Sport can be a valuable tool to promote health and prevent disease in two primary ways – through direct participation in sport itself, and through the use of participatory and spectator sport as a platform for communication, education and social mobilization. Well-designed initiatives can lead to benefits in both areas.

Increasing physical activity

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality. Evidence shows that regular

The World Health Organization recommends that children aged 5 to 17 should engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily to improve cardio-respiratory and muscular fitness, bone health and cardiovascular and metabolic health biomarkers. Most of the daily physical activity should be aerobic. Engaging in more than 60 minutes of physical activity provides additional health benefits. Vigorous-intensity activities, including those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be undertaken at least three times per week.

and health of children and adolescents and can prevent them from acquiring abnormal or excessive accumulations of fat that can negatively impact their health.\textsuperscript{24} Compared to inactive young people, physically active children and adolescents have higher levels of cardio-respiratory fitness, muscular endurance and muscular strength.\textsuperscript{25}

- **Healthy brain development:** Numerous studies have pointed to the importance of physical exercise in relation to healthy brain development in childhood and beyond. Exercise has been found to impact the brain architecture in young children by increasing connectivity and intellectual development, as well as the ability to process new information.

- **Improved mental health:** Exercise contributes to decreased levels of depression and improved ability to cope with stress and trauma.\textsuperscript{26} It also increases the sense of personal well-being. These factors have made sport especially suitable in certain conflict-affected contexts, where children are at heightened risk for exposure to violence.

- **Reduced vulnerability to infectious disease:** Participation in sport can raise children’s self-esteem and encourage them to take better care and be more respectful of their bodies. This, in turn, empowers them to make healthy choices that can limit their vulnerability to infectious diseases. Spectator sports also create opportunities to reach millions with messages that help reduce the spread of communicable diseases.\textsuperscript{27}
SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

To ensure that children create a foundation upon which to lead healthy lives, UNICEF country offices may:

- Support national health promotion strategies that incorporate physical activity in and out of school to prevent and reduce non-communicable diseases and as a component of overall child development;
- Reinforce nutrition programmes by promoting exercise and healthy lifestyles;
- Support policy development and professional capacity-building to deliver appropriate physical activity programmes, including physical education as part of the school curriculum;
- Assess and support safe spaces for children to engage in physical activity;
- Engage young people through programmes during school vacations that are focused on sport for development and fun;
- Raise awareness among parents and the community at large about the health benefits of sport and physical activity, especially in cultures where girls at puberty are restricted from participating.

PARTNERING WITH SPECIAL OLYMPICS TO REACH CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

For more than 40 years, Special Olympics has been tapping into the vast potential of sport to empower people with intellectual disabilities. It has grown from a small movement with a few hundred people to one involving more than 3.7 million athletes in over 170 countries, providing year-round sports training, athletic competition and other related programmes.

UNICEF’s work with Special Olympics (SO) dates back to 2007, but the partnership was strengthened at the 2011 Special Olympics Games with a signed Memorandum of Understanding. The agreement commits the two organizations to work together to challenge negative attitudes about children with disabilities, and change laws and policies that deny them equitable access to health, education and other social services.

Children with disabilities are routinely denied equal access to health and social services; similarly, their parents often lack access to basic information concerning their children’s health. To close this information gap, SO created Family Health Forums, a model that convenes doctors, educators, advocates and other experts in one place – often organized around a special SO competition or event – to provide parents with critical information.

UNICEF’s participation in the Family Health Forums – most recently in Nigeria, where it discussed safe handwashing and hygiene – are an important element of the partnership, and a critical area for further exploration.
Promoting healthy attitudes and behaviour through participatory and spectator sport

The widespread popularity of sport makes it an ideal communication platform for informing and mobilizing children and young people to protect their health and fight disease. Sport and games can be used to:

- **Build knowledge**: Many popular children’s sports and games (e.g. relays, tag, dodge ball and races) can be modified to teach health lessons, including messages about sanitation, malaria prevention, nutrition and immunization.

- **Stimulate discussion about sensitive health issues**: One of the greatest benefits of sport is its capacity to bring people together and activate discussion on sensitive subjects among children. Through participating in sport, children can establish positive peer groups and start to address social norms about health, including healthy behaviours, regular exercise and diet. In some areas, girls-only sport teams have served as a forum for girls to raise their concerns and questions about menstrual health, sexuality and health goals.

- **Promote health messages and provide services**: Major sporting events, which often engage celebrity athletes, provide special opportunities to mobilize communities around public health campaigns. These events can be used to promote healthy lifestyles by stressing the benefits of exercise, good hygiene and proper sanitation, and by cautioning against health risks, including alcohol, smoking and other drugs. They can also be used to save lives – serving as a venue for community health workers to mobilize support for the immunization of children, distribute insecticide-treated mosquito nets to protect families from malaria, and dispense vitamin A supplements. Popular athletes and large sport festivals and events have the power to attract people who normally do not have access to health services, especially those living in rural or remote areas. They can also provide a link to services like HIV testing, vaccinations and birth registration.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION**

To promote healthy attitudes and behaviour through sport, UNICEF country offices may:

- Support NGOs that use sport as a vehicle for health promotion;
- Invest in the capacity development of NGOs that use sport as a tool to teach about health;
- Support health campaigns that use sport as a platform;
- Identify partners from the world of sport that can help with health campaigns by raising awareness, spreading key messages and disseminating materials, such as malaria nets or condoms;
- Support partners to gather data that captures how changes in children’s knowledge, attitudes and life skills resulting from their participation in sport impact their health behaviours.

See sections 4.1 and 4.2 for more information on leveraging major sport events and sport celebrities to disseminate key UNICEF messages.
Play and early childhood development

Early childhood marks a critical period in the life of a child, and can set the foundation for healthy development and life-long learning. Research shows that early childhood is the most critical period for brain development, and that experiences in the first years of life have more lasting impact on mental health and development than any others.30

Play is not only a child’s inalienable right. It also influences cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development, and should therefore be considered a core component of developmentally appropriate early childhood development (ECD) programmes.31

Through play, children explore, invent and create. They also develop social skills, learn to express their emotions, and gain confidence about their own capabilities. Both structured and unstructured play activities are necessary for healthy development. Unstructured play allows children to explore at their own pace, while structured or semi-structured play can be designed to produce specific learning outcomes (such as the development of motor skills) or to ensure that all children are included. It is important for children to have the chance

When Bangladesh hosted the 2011 Cricket World Cup, cricket fever swept the nation. For the first time, young girls were given the opportunity to compete in a national all-girl cricket tournament. ©UNICEF/BANAB2011-00057/JANNATUL MAWA

As a part of the global campaign to eradicate polio, UNICEF worked with the International Cricket Council (ICC) during the ICC T20 World Cup 2012 in Sri Lanka to convey powerful messaging about the worldwide effort to immunize all children against polio. Prior to the games, India cricket stars Virender Sehwag, Suresh Raina, Harbhajan Singh and Rohit Sharma met with Afghanistan captain Nawroz Mangal and a few of his team-mates to exchange bats signed by both sides, symbolizing their mutual commitment to end polio. The bats were then presented by UNICEF to the Governments of Afghanistan and India to emphasize cricket’s support in the fight against polio. During the India-Afghanistan match, UNICEF, with the support of the ICC, displayed messages in English, Hindi and Pashto, calling for parents to immunize their children against polio.29

Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan are the only three remaining countries yet to stop poliovirus transmission. India became polio free in January 2012 and is now committed to supporting Afghanistan and Pakistan in eradicating the virus in South Asia.
to play both indoors and outside, as they offer different types of sensory stimulation and learning opportunities.

Play is particularly important in the psycho-social rehabilitation of children during and after humanitarian emergencies, as it helps them to address their traumatic experiences and restores a sense of normalcy. UNICEF has taken major steps to advance the use of play in those settings with the launch of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Kit in 2009. The kit contains 37 items (e.g. dominoes, colouring pencils, construction blocks, hand puppets, puzzle blocks, memory games) designed to promote social interaction among young children and their peers and caregivers. Before its global unveiling, the kit was piloted in seven countries in crisis or post-crisis transition, including Chad, Iraq and Maldives. UNICEF plans to use the kit in its response to ongoing and developing crises.

2.2 Education

UNICEF works to ensure that every child – regardless of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, health, ability or circumstances – has access to a quality education; it simultaneously advocates for children and young people to learn the skills needed to lead a healthy and productive life. This work is an integral component of UNICEF’s signature framework for education, the Child-Friendly Schools model, which is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Child-Friendly Schools model incorporates physical activity and life skills education in the curriculum. Dedicating time during and after the school day to physical education not only allows children to enjoy their right to recreation and play, but it also spurs their cognitive, social, emotional and physical development.

In recognition of the fact that an estimated 67 million primary school-aged children are out of school – the majority of them girls – UNICEF also supports initiatives that bring sport and recreation to children outside the formal education system. These often have a particular focus on ensuring that girls can participate in a safe environment.

Physical education and sport in schools

Physical Education (PE) is the common name used to refer to the practice of engaging children and adolescents in structured physical activity within formal educational settings, including pre-schools. Although
PE curricula vary by country, they offer school children a unique opportunity to benefit from psychomotor learning. When done in a well-structured setting, PE offers incomparable physical and mental health benefits.

Unfortunately, there has been a steady decline in physical education as a global priority. Many countries are grappling with a shortage of facilities, equipment, materials and trained personnel. Against this background, physical education is too often perceived to be a non-educational recreational activity, and therefore inferior to academic subjects.

Among UN entities, UNESCO is the lead agency coordinating the global drive to promote quality education for all, working with a wide range of partners to make education – including physical education – a top priority on global and national agendas. As a key partner, UNICEF has a role to play in advocating for the inclusion of PE in national curricula.

In fact, UNICEF has been able to use sport as a means of influencing national education reform. In Mozambique, for example, UNICEF contributed to the development of a National Strategy on PE and Sport by helping to gather national stakeholders in a multi-departmental National Task Force led by the

Here, children are learning to play, but also playing to learn. Children use play to explore, imagine, create, communicate and learn how to interact with others.

Larisa Virtosu, ECD Officer, UNICEF Moldova
Department of Basic Education. In 2009, one of the major activities of the Task Force was to develop a child-friendly manual for physical education and sports that would complement the existing PE manual for primary schools. And in Zambia, UNICEF helped prioritize physical education and teacher capacity by contributing to a National Curriculum Revision symposium. UNICEF will help disseminate and distribute the new curriculum, as well as contribute to monitoring and evaluation of its implementation.

By highlighting the benefits of PE on key focus areas (children’s health, education, protection and participation), UNICEF can put forth the following arguments in support of physical education:

- **Health benefits**: Physical activity confers a wide range of mental and physical health benefits and is critical for healthy brain development in young children (see section 2.1).

- **Enhancing the capacity to learn**: Evidence shows that participation in physical education not only improves learning, but it has other benefits as well. Short-term exercise creates a state of relaxation that lasts up to two hours, which improves children’s concentration, creativity, mood and memory; it also improves their ability to perform tasks and solve problems. Other longer-term benefits include increased self-confidence and self-image, reduced frustration, aggression, anxiety and depression. These short-term and long-term benefits improve a child’s readiness to learn and create an environment that is more conducive to learning.

- **Increasing school enrolment and retention rates**: Most children are naturally attracted to sport and play. Integrating sport and play into school curricula – both as subject areas and by incorporating play-based learning – can draw children into school and boost retention rates.

- **Dedicating time to physical education does not hinder academic performance**: Researchers have found that time taken from other subjects to make room for physical activity, when handled competently, does not hinder academic achievement. On the other hand, adding time to “academic” or “curricular” subjects by taking time from physical education programmes does not enhance grades in these subjects and may be detrimental to health.
In some of India’s more remote areas, adolescent girls do not have the same opportunities as their male peers. They are less likely to go to school, make their own life choices, or have a voice in their community. They are more likely to marry young and often give birth to children when they are not physically or emotionally ready, at great danger to their own lives.

The Government of India has tried to address this situation through policies such as the Dowry Prohibition Act and by introducing a quota for women within the local government system. Since the quota system was introduced in village councils, approximately one million women have joined the elected local government bodies. However, effective participation of women in local government is hard to achieve. In order to break down long-standing barriers to female participation, rural villages need effective young female leaders in their communities.

The Government of India is working with key partners like UNICEF to overcome these hurdles. Through its work under International Inspiration, the legacy programme of the 2012 Olympics, UNICEF has been promoting the right of every child to both education and play through advocacy, policy engagement, capacity development, technical support, monitoring and evaluation.

Through the Community Sport Programme, which falls under the International Inspiration umbrella, 1000 master trainers and 30,000 local sport coaches have been trained using a methodology co-developed by UNICEF under Panchayat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA,) the flagship programme of India’s Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The modules, which include sections on nutrition, health, personal hygiene, education, child protection and inclusion, will be used to train 250,000 coaches over the next ten years. The programme has also enhanced the quality of PE in thousands of schools and provided key technical support to the government to promote physical education in its 1.3 million primary schools under the landmark Right to Education Act.

Since the Community Sport Programme started in 2007, India has seen positive change in terms of women’s leadership representation. More than 35 of the young women trained as community sports coaches have gone on to be elected as Village Panches, assuming critical roles in the governance of their local communities and providing a voice for other young women.

One such coach turned local politician is 24-year-old Ujjawala, who led sport sessions for children from her village before going on to be elected Sarpanch (mayor). When asked about her journey to the highest position in her village, a remarkable achievement for an unmarried woman in a tribal district, Ujjawala said that the sport for development programme helped her reach her full potential. In spite of her many new responsibilities, she still leads sessions and says that she will continue to do so as much as possible. Leaders like Ujjawala are a great example for other young women in India’s rural regions.

**FROM VOLUNTEER TO VILLAGE SARPANCH – THE STORY OF INTERNATIONAL INSPIRATION IN RURAL INDIA**

Villagers from Mathaldibri village participating in a community sports day that was organized by a UNICEF-supported programme, Messengers of Knowledge. **UNICEF/INDA2011-00080/GRAHAM CROUCH**
Physical education in schools sets the foundation for life-long physical activity: Participation in physical education can help students build resilience and gain the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to engage in life-long physical activity. For girls, education, both formal and non-formal, is an important factor that increases their likelihood of participating in sport and physical activity into adulthood.

Children can learn important skills: Physical literacy is a core part of a holistic education. Sport and play activities in schools help children – especially girls who are less likely to engage in sport and physical activities outside of school – develop the life skills they need for healthy development and life-long learning. Some of the specific life skills that can be learned through participating in physical activity programmes include: team-building, communication, decision-making, problem-solving, sense of community, self-esteem, personal responsibility, empathy, dealing with diversity and inclusion, moral development, resilience and a desire for educational achievement.

Play is an effective learning method: Using play in educational settings positively impacts how children learn. Play-based, experiential methods of learning shift the mode of education from rote learning to learning by doing, observing, interacting and experimenting. Children are more likely to absorb new information and apply what they have learned when they have opportunities to ask questions, air concerns, share ideas with each other and test their knowledge in an experiential way. Teachers can lead guided discussion before, during and after games that allow children to reflect on the activities, connect them to their own experiences, and identify how they can impact their lives. Further, emerging data on sport and play-based programmes show that youth are more likely to retain health messages if they are conveyed using participatory, game-based methods.

Inclusive physical education and sport promotes gender equity and the involvement of children with disabilities: For example, there is substantial and well established evidence tracking the contribution of physical education and sport to girls’ and women’s...
development and achievements, including educational attainment and educational outcomes such as leadership, citizenship, self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Organized sport programmes during or after school can complement participation in physical education classes. What is important is the structure and frequency of the class, the quality of the teacher or leader, and the relevance of the curriculum. While competitive sport programmes can offer benefits in terms of teaching teamwork and discipline, non-competitive programmes based on inclusivity and accessibility may be more appropriate in certain contexts to reach and engage all children. These programmes particularly benefit the most marginalized, including girls and children with disabilities.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION**

To promote physical education and sport programming in formal and non-formal education settings, UNICEF country offices are encouraged to:

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**SAMOA: INTEGRATING PHYSICAL EDUCATION INTO SCHOOL CURRICULA**

Physical activity is an important tool used to reverse the spread of non-communicable disease in Samoa, where the population has a high prevalence of obesity and related health problems. Toward this end, the *Fiafia Sports Programme* (FSP) was created to encourage physical activity at a young age, increasing the likelihood that children will remain active in their adult years.

FSP has been designed as a fun, games-based sport programme aimed at improving physical activity opportunities and experiences for every primary school child aged 5 – 14 years, regardless of gender or ability.

The programme trains teachers to deliver the *Fiafia* methodology within schools. The training is focused on teaching schools to implement activities according to seven key principles. All activities must: (1) be **fun**; (2) aim for **maximum participation**; (3) be able to be modified to ensure they are **inclusive**; (4) be **appropriate**, according to students’ age, ability and gender; (5) be appropriately **challenging** (neither too hard nor too easy); (6) keep children **safe**; and (7) be **planned**, from warm-up through to cool-down activities.

Thanks to *Fiafia*, children from participating schools now have regular, weekly sports programmes taking place in their schools, and they have the opportunity to be included regardless of their gender or ability. Furthermore, the programme teaches them leadership and decision-making skills, and the children are given the chance to evaluate the lessons run by teachers.

Established and made compulsory in 2007, the programme aims to train teachers from every primary school in Samoa by 2015.
Support the training of teachers, including pre-school teachers, and coaches to effectively deliver PE and sport programmes, with an emphasis on play-based learning and participatory methods, and a sensitivity to inclusion and gender issues.

Support and/or lead efforts to monitor and evaluate how sport and play are integrated within schools and pre-schools to determine where further support, resources and/or training is needed. These efforts are also useful to gather evidence of immediate, medium and long-term impacts, among them: physical self-confidence; empowerment; inclusion (particularly of girls and children with disabilities); health benefits; attendance rates; and life skills imparted.

Support Ministries of Education, Youth and Sports in developing teaching resources, planning and budgeting for physical education, and integrating play into school curricula.

Facilitate regional knowledge exchange fora to share experiences regarding curricula, resources and strategies for the successful integration of sport and play.

Strengthen national policy for physical education, physical activity and sport for all.

Promote community support for sport and play-based learning.

Identify partners who can integrate regular physical activity into formal and non-formal education for children, starting at a young age.

Partner with agencies that can offer sport and play opportunities in community settings for out-of-school children.

Involve parents and caregivers in modelling how to use play-based learning. For example, parent-teacher days or play days can be used to demonstrate to parents how children learn through play and sport and what parents can do at home to supplement play-based learning.

Distribute equipment and promote the development of safe and appropriate play spaces for girls and boys.

Advocate and provide support to increase collaboration among relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Youth and Sport, etc.

Integrate S4D into country programmes, as appropriate.

While competitive sport programmes can offer benefits in terms of teaching teamwork and discipline, non-competitive programmes based on inclusivity and accessibility may be more appropriate in certain contexts to reach and engage all children.
2.3 HIV and AIDS

Sport and physical education have tremendous potential to impact HIV and AIDS prevention, awareness and treatment efforts. When effectively integrated into HIV and AIDS programming, sport and physical education provide a platform for raising awareness and reducing vulnerability, addressing stigma and discrimination for individuals living with and affected by HIV, mobilizing actors in prevention, and promoting links to services and resources. There is also evidence that participation in regular physical activity can have a positive effect on the lives of individuals living with HIV or AIDS.46

Raising awareness and reducing vulnerability

The majority of sport-based HIV initiatives focus on sharing information and using interactive games and activities to teach youth about measures to prevent and minimize the risk of contracting the virus. However, sport-based interventions can also contribute to the HIV and AIDS response by:

- **Challenging social norms** through open discussion of sexuality, inequality, stigma and discrimination in a safe environment.
- **Teaching life skills** that help children adopt and sustain less risky behaviours (for example, goal-setting, negotiation and problem-solving).
- **Informing about access to services** and encouraging children to get tested.
- **Promoting gender equality**, which empowers girls to adopt healthy behaviours.
- **Promoting inclusion and support** for children infected with and affected by HIV.
- **Addressing stigma and discrimination** for individuals living with and affected by HIV and AIDS.
- **Providing positive role models** in the form of sport coaches and peer leaders.

In Honduras, the child rights-based programme *Football for Life* promotes HIV and AIDS prevention and protects young people from sexual exploitation and child labour by using a network of more than 1,000 volunteers, including parents, teachers and local leaders. Older adolescents act as role models for younger football players; matches are accompanied by

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Dr. Peter Piot, Former Executive Director of UNAIDS

One third of the ... people living with HIV are young people under age 25, many of whom are involved in sports either as spectators or as participants...The sports community is a key partner in reaching out to young men and women, whether in their village or town, or globally.
skits, discussions and events that highlight the dangers of HIV and AIDS and the importance of protecting children from harm.\(^{47}\)

Participation in sport can serve as a protective factor for youth with regard to HIV and AIDS; sport is particularly useful as a mechanism to reach girls. The psychosocial support given by coaches, peer groups and role models can help adolescents acquire positive coping mechanisms, which, in turn, can help them avoid risky behaviours and reduce the chances of transmission.\(^ {48}\) In addition, sport-based programming offers an opportunity to challenge gender norms, which can begin a process of transforming community attitudes towards girls as well as the attitudes of girls themselves.

Sport, play and games can also be used to communicate messages about tolerance and inclusion of children and adolescents with HIV or AIDS. The fun and experiential aspects of these activities are often used to generate dialogue about sensitive issues related to HIV and AIDS, including sexuality, gender roles and experiences of stigma. Yet to achieve this breakthrough, sport-related programming must walk a fine line between engaging children in physical play and providing them with the skills and information they need to boost confidence and protect their health.

As Marlon Thompson, HIV and AIDS officer in UNICEF Trinidad and Tobago put it: “We need to move away from the ‘Get them tired’ approach – where we ask youth to run around playing a sport in the hopes they’ll be too tired to engage in sexual activity...”

Nokwanda Mchunu catches a football outside of her school in South Africa’s KwaZulu-Natal Province. Nokwanda, who has been living with her aunt since her mother died, is determined to do well in school. “My dream is to live a better life,” she says. ©UNICEF/NYHQ2010-0571/GIACOMO PIROZZI
– or the ‘Hide the ball’ approach, where we entice them to come with promises of sport, but spend much of our time lecturing rather than playing. We have to deliver on our promise to provide quality sporting activities in the context of quality HIV and AIDS programming.”

**Mobilizing actors in HIV and AIDS prevention and providing links to services and resources**

The use of sport and play should extend beyond awareness-raising activities and life skills training to building supportive environments that help children and adolescents adopt and sustain healthy behaviours. Access to Voluntary and Confidential Counselling and Testing (VCCT), condoms, and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) treatment are often severely limited, particularly in humanitarian settings. In such contexts, sporting events can be used to provide young people with resources for HIV and AIDS prevention, including counselling, testing and condom distribution.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION**

The following are suggestions for building HIV-focused S4D initiatives:

- Strengthen the quality of the technical component of sport-based interventions by forming alliances among partners, including those organizations that are sport related and those working with persons living with HIV.

- Involve adults and children living with HIV or AIDS in all phases of programming, including: design; implementation as leaders, coaches, trainers and mentors; and programme monitoring and evaluation.

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Children play in Swaziland’s Lobamba Region. They are participating in the UNICEF-sponsored Life Skills through Sport programme, which uses games to teach children in Swaziland about health and the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

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

Mwanamisi Ali, 19, goalkeeper for Chelsea Ladies football team, Kenya
Grassroot Soccer (GRS) is a southern Africa-based initiative that uses soccer related language, activities and metaphors to teach young people HIV prevention and life skills. Since 2003, more than 300,000 youth throughout sub-Saharan Africa have graduated from programmes based on the GRS model, which has had noted success in reducing risky sexual behaviour, increasing HIV and AIDS knowledge, diminishing stigma and breaking the silence surrounding HIV.

Founded by former professional soccer players from Zimbabwe, GRS trains African soccer stars, coaches, teachers and peer educators in HIV-affected countries to deliver an interactive HIV prevention curriculum, called Skillz, to youth aged 12-18, both in and after school.

Participants complete eight 45-minute activity-based sessions that underscore simple but powerful connections between soccer and life skills. In an activity called Risk Field, for example, participants dribble a soccer ball between cones representing HIV-related risks — multiple partners, drug/alcohol abuse, sugar daddies, etc. If players hit a cone, they and their teammates must do three push-ups, showing how the consequences of one person’s risk can affect not only him or her, but also friends, family and community. Young people can also participate in street soccer leagues and Skillz tournaments, which take advantage of the presence of large numbers of young people to convey testing, counselling and “Know Your Status” messages, and provide onsite HIV testing and immediate enrolment into care and treatment for HIV.

RESULTS

A behavioural survey conducted in Zimbabwe found that, two to five years after participating in the programme:

- Graduates were nearly six times less likely than their peers to report sexual debut between the ages of 12 and 15.
- Graduates were four times less likely to report sexual activity within the last year than their peers.
- Graduates were eight times less likely to report ever having had more than one sexual partner.
- Graduates were much less likely to have intergenerational sex (0%) than non-graduates (24%).
- Graduates had better attitudes about caring for an HIV-positive family member.

In addition to these behavioural changes, the programme also resulted in a number of critical lessons learned, among them:

- **Reaching girls is crucial:** Grassroot Soccer recognizes that established gender roles influence risky sexual behaviour, and must be addressed in order for HIV prevention efforts to have lasting impact. Currently, 50 per cent of participants are girls, and GRS encourages girls to become active in HIV prevention programming, sport and their communities.
- **The coach-player relationship is fundamental to the programme’s long-term success:** GRS emphasizes the importance of coaches developing personal connections with players and creating a safe space for youth to acquire life skills and learn about HIV prevention.
- **Interacting with role models are key to changing behaviour:** Meaningful conversations with role models can help young people internalize HIV-prevention messages a lot better than memorization. Coaches are trained to facilitate “vital conversations,” the goal being to catalyse lasting behaviour change.
- **Discovery-based learning is key:** Youth learn best through active participation, as opposed to the more passive style common in many public schools.

Boys play soccer at a settlement in the village of Nyamukwara near the Mozambican border, where UNICEF has built an outdoor classroom for children who have been displaced. ©UNICEF/NYHQ2006-0452/GIACOMO PIROZZI
In addition to providing information on HIV and AIDS, initiatives should take a holistic approach and consider how to address other concerns among adolescents, such as sexual or reproductive health, teen pregnancy, sexually-transmitted infections and gender-based violence.

Identify local sport celebrities living with HIV or AIDS to communicate anti-stigma messages through media channels or at sporting events.

Ensure accurate and coordinated messaging on HIV and AIDS. To facilitate this process, UNICEF can encourage S4D organizations to join a network of stakeholders in sport-based HIV and AIDS prevention efforts (e.g. local authorities who provide and maintain sport facilities, NGOs and community-based organizations that use sport and recreation in HIV and AIDS prevention, and ministries of education, youth and sport). UNICEF can also convene meetings between sport partners and local AIDS service organizations and help identify nationally agreed-upon prevention messages.

Use sport events to communicate prevention messages and referrals for testing and services to large groups of individuals.

When designing S4D programmes, UNICEF colleagues should be aware of the potential risks that can be associated with the world of sport, such as violence and exploitation.
- Ensure partners have a non-disclosure policy on HIV status.

- Identify partners that have a strong focus on training and capacity-building and can scale up sport activities. Training must be designed to ensure coaches are equipped with the skills and knowledge to implement high-quality sport experiences and communicate accurate information about HIV and AIDS through these activities.

### 2.4 Child Protection

Sport can play an important role in promoting critical child protection issues. At the same time, when designing programmes, UNICEF colleagues should be aware of the potential risks that can also be associated with the world of sport, such as violence and exploitation. This section focuses on the potential risks of violence and exploitation associated with sport.

#### Identifying the forms of violence and exploitation that heighten risks to children and adolescents in sport

Violence against children in sport may include physical abuse (e.g. the use of corporal punishment by coaches), sexual abuse (e.g. requiring sex as a prerequisite for team selection or privileges), psychological abuse (e.g. bullying or hazing) or neglect (e.g. injury or nutrition and weight loss regimes, or excessive physical demands of elite sport training).
International sporting events can also create settings in which there is an increased risk of sexual exploitation of children and of child sex tourism.

Another form of violence that has been linked with the world of sport is sport-related trafficking, which involves the recruitment, transport or sale of child athletes across national borders. Though systematic data is hard to find, there are known cases of trafficking of minors to play in professional baseball or football leagues. In some countries, unofficial and unregulated training centres test young players who are then recruited or discarded, and who may then become involved in illegal migration or be traded from club to club.51

UNICEF’s response to violence and exploitation in sport

UNICEF has led and supported a number of initiatives to protect children in sport, such as:

- **The International Child Protection and Sport Fund of UNICEF France** supported initiatives to prevent child exploitation and trafficking in sport in selected countries in Africa.

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In Côte d’Ivoire, one child out of two does not have a birth certificate, without which a child’s most basic right to identity is denied. Children lacking birth certificates also face obstacles to school enrolment. While most children attend primary school, the lack of a birth certificate prevents many from continuing on to the secondary level. Children without an identity are also at a higher risk of contracting HIV and AIDS, and face greater exposure to violence, abuse and exploitation.

To address this problem, UNICEF worked with the Ivorian Scouts Association and Football Federation to launch “Straight to the Goal,” an S4D programme that uses football to promote birth registration and protect vulnerable children. Some 4,000 children were registered during the project.

As part of the programme, the “Straight to the Goal” football tournament invited 320 boys and girls from the most vulnerable communities to participate in 32 matches. The children learned basic football techniques, as well as how to protect themselves from HIV, violence and abuse, and how to access appropriate services.

According to 13-year-old Eric, a fifth-grader from Bondoukou who participated in the programme:

*Many of my friends were not registered at birth, and many do not attend school, especially the girls. Among my classmates, those who do not have birth certificates cannot take the exam to get their Certificate of Primary Elementary Studies. In fact, in Bondoukou, more than 10,000 boys and girls couldn’t take the exam because they aren’t registered! Through the Boy Scouts of Côte d’Ivoire, UNICEF has been running a major awareness campaign on birth registration, education, child abuse, and HIV and AIDS in four major regions of the country, including Bondoukou.

UNICEF and the Ivorian Football Federation held a football tournament called “Straight to the Goal” for boys and girls aged 7-17 years. We ended up with more than 300 children playing football, while sending the message to adults to respect our rights. We did skits, poems and songs; we had fun and I could tell parents to register the birth of their children at City Hall and send them to school.

I would like all my classmates to be able to continue school with me.*
West Indies Cricket Board, in partnership with UNICEF and the NGO Action for Children, developed a manual and trained cricket coaches in Barbados on how to promote child protection.

UNICEF Child-Friendly Spaces were established by UNICEF South Africa in collaboration with the government and civil society organizations around World Cup 2010 to prevent and address the exploitation of children.

UNICEF Supply Division conducts a due diligence process before selecting a manufacturer for sports equipment to ensure against partnering with companies that violate child labour laws. This includes a review of the company’s business practices against criteria central to UNICEF’s core values, including the protection of children from exploitation and abuse.


London 2012 International Inspiration Initiative (II), a partnership of UK Sport, UNICEF UK and the British Council, has promoted child protection in sport among participating countries.

With technical support from UNICEF, Flamengo (Brazil’s biggest sport club) is implementing a comprehensive action plan to promote and protect the rights of children and adolescents inside and outside of the club, with specific child protection results to be achieved.

Using sport to reduce violence

Sport programming can also be used to reduce children’s exposure to violence by providing an alternative to risky behaviours, such as gang membership. For example, in Trinidad and Tobago, young people at risk of anti-social activity are learning leadership skills, self-respect, confidence and teamwork through sport programmes provided by International Inspiration, the London 2012 Olympics’ legacy programme, of which UNICEF UK is a partner. In Brazil, the organization Luta Pela Paz (Struggle for Peace) provides boxing training to adolescents as a way to channel aggressive tendencies and present a positive alternative to involvement in organized crime.

Palestinian girls in the West Bank practicing their right to play as part of the Sports for Development Project. UNICEF, the International Volley Ball Federation and CIDA finance the programme.
SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

To strengthen sport programming to enhance children’s safety, UNICEF country offices should consider the following:

- **Review UNICEF-supported programmes to ensure that child protection measures have been integrated into sporting activities.** If not, work with implementing partner organizations to put appropriate measures in place and ensure proper reporting mechanisms have been established.

- **Support implementing partners in promoting girls’ safety.** Ensure that transportation is provided or that sports activities are held at a location that is within a short distance from girls’ homes. Activities should be scheduled at times of the day when it is safer to move around for vulnerable groups, particularly girls. Take existing gender norms into consideration when planning sporting and recreational activities— and who can do what — in open public spaces, and support partners in adapting and expanding these activities as social norms change.

- **Strengthen child protection systems among sports federations and clubs; review coaching qualifications among administering bodies.** Child protection assurances (such as background checks) should be among the required qualifications for sport coaching.

- **Assess training materials of partner organizations.** Ensure that coach training materials promote respect, cooperation and fair play, and tackle how to address aggression and conflicts during sport.

- **Explore potential links between sports federations and child protection agencies.** If none have been established, examine whether such links could be encouraged and whether there is a convening role for UNICEF.

- **Facilitate discussions about child protection among sport-related agencies.** This could involve convening stakeholders to initiate discussion, share information and provide guidance on policy development, as well as to inform them about the rights and needs of children, inadvertent breaches of child protection standards, where to turn if they have concerns about a child, and signs and indicators of abuse and violence to children.

- **Make sports initiatives ‘child-friendly’ by ensuring not just freedom from exploitation and abuse but also the chance for children to participate in decision-making and have access to a quality experience.**
2.5 Emergency Operations

Sport and play can be used as a tool for emergency preparedness as well as in the early stages of the emergency response, and can continue being used throughout recovery and reconstruction. Sport and play activities are well-documented tools that can help children give voice to their feelings, alleviate their stress, strengthen their resiliency and regain a sense of normalcy.53 54

UNICEF’s work in humanitarian settings is guided by the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) in Humanitarian Action, which lay out UNICEF’s policy on upholding the rights of children affected by emergencies.55 Sport and play are recognized as important tools to support children in conflict, natural disaster, or other types of emergency contexts.56

In humanitarian settings, UNICEF is primarily involved in two activities related to sport and play:

1. The creation of Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS), which are designed to engage children and caregivers in structured recreational and educational activities, as well as to provide access to basic health and nutrition services. CFS offer regularly-scheduled activities, such as games, drama, art and sports

Following a conflict or natural disaster, play allows children to deal with the stress and trauma they’ve experienced. It is a means of rebuilding communities and reminding children that they aren’t alone. In the context of helping children recover, this is pivotal. Sport and play provide structure and familiarity and a sense of continuity to a child’s day. When their world has been shattered, participation in sport and play teaches them solidarity and rebuilds hope.

Jill Van den Brule, Youth and Adolescent Specialist, UNICEF Haiti
for youth from the surrounding community. These activities are designed to become a part of formal schooling and after-school recreational activities for adolescents and youth.

2. The distribution of the **Recreation Kit** and **Early Childhood Development Kit**, which are used in Child-Friendly Spaces and delivered to partner organizations for use. (See box.)

### Recreation and ECD kits in humanitarian settings

The Recreation Kit was developed in recognition of the importance of sport and play in helping children deal with the trauma caused by war or natural disasters. The kit helps children and adolescents rebuild their world and community by providing them with semi-structured recreational activities, helping them recover their psychosocial well-being, and encouraging self-expression.

Following the tsunami in December 2004, UNICEF’s East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office evaluated their pre-packaged emergency Education and Recreation Kits in Aceh Province, Indonesia.

Teachers and project staff reported that the kits were highly useful in helping children resume their education and providing them with an opportunity for play. Children credited much of their happiness in going back to school to the games provided, which allowed them to engage in group sport activities.

Despite these positive reviews, the study also found that teachers were reticent about using the recreational materials in the classroom in the first three months following the tsunami. This was partly due to the limited safe space around many of the temporary learning centres, but equally due to teachers’ limited interest in and ability to use sport materials with their students.

The study cautioned that it is important to be realistic about the possibility of introducing new teaching methodologies in the first phase following an emergency, pointing out that teachers often fall back on more traditional teaching styles as a form of security in a time of great flux. It is therefore important to consider whether to include items within the kits that require a different teaching approach.58

The review highlighted two critical lessons learned:

- Schools and agencies receiving the Recreation Kits should have guidelines to help maximize use of the materials. These may consist of a brief set of ‘teacher friendly’ tips explaining the purpose of the kit as well as the function of each individual item and recommendations on how to care for these.

- The quality of the items is paramount to the kit’s effectiveness. Low quality sports materials can result in the materials being rapidly damaged.
The basic kit consists of a resource box of sports and other recreational items, and contains both indoor and outdoor sports equipment.

For children six years and younger, the Early Childhood Development Kit contains a range of games and art materials. It is designed to be used by 50 children at one time and is suitable for indoor and outdoor use. (See box in section 2.1 for more details on the ECD kit.)

In conflict and post-conflict situations, UNICEF also works with partners to use sport as a tool to rehabilitate children and young people affected by conflict, and to teach them skills pertaining to conflict resolution. Numerous international agreements and instruments recognize the power and versatility of sport to help prevent conflict and build peace, including: the Olympic Truce, which grants safe passage to athletes travelling to the Olympics from warring countries; the 2007 Brazzaville Declaration, which led to the creation of the Foundation for Youth, Sport and Peace, an organization that implements projects for the development of African youth through Sport and for Peace; and several UN resolutions on Sport for Development, such as “Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace,” which calls for a greater awareness and action to foster peace and accelerate the attainment of the MDGs through sport-based initiatives, while promoting the integration of sport into the development agenda.

In Sri Lanka, UNICEF-supported programmes use cricket in the rehabilitation of former child soldiers; nearly 600 children have benefited from educational, vocational, recreational and psychosocial activities. A key aspect of the rehabilitation is “Cricket Peer Leader” training, which helps children appreciate the values of trust, respect and fair play off the cricket field.

In Colombia, UNICEF is supporting a programme that uses football to protect children and youth vulnerable to violence, conflict and recruitment by armed groups. The strategy, known as the “Golombiao,” is designed to get the players to identify their problems, resolve their differences and reach agreements without the benefit of referees. Some 64,000 children, adolescents and youths across 16 departments in Colombia have participated to date.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

UNICEF country offices should consider the following when promoting the use of sport and play for psychosocial rehabilitation:

In Sri Lanka, UNICEF-supported programmes use cricket in the rehabilitation of former child soldiers; and in Colombia, UNICEF is supporting a programme that uses football to protect children and youth vulnerable to violence, conflict and recruitment by armed groups.
When working with Ministries of Education, NGOs and other civil society partners in humanitarian crises, **promote the use of sport and play activities that facilitate children’s psychosocial rehabilitation**, provide regularity and a sense of normalcy, and assist eventual re-entry to school.

**Encourage partners to address the needs of children of all ages through play and sport activities.** Children of all ages, including the youngest, should have the opportunity to participate in sport and play. Young children caught in the emotional and physical disruptions of war or natural disasters are particularly vulnerable, as early child development is a critical stage for cognitive, emotional and social development.

**Establish safe spaces for sport and play.** To mitigate the emotional and psychological impact of conflict or natural disaster, it is critical to set up safe recreational areas as quickly as possible. To achieve this, staff should have a clear understanding of Child-Friendly areas and how to train implementers.
In areas of ongoing conflict, work with partners to ensure conflict-sensitive approaches are utilised; these create an opportunity to build team-work without creating potential flash points. Non-contact sports, such as volleyball, can be particularly effective in conflict and post-conflict scenarios.

Identify partners who can train teachers to use sport and play activities to teach cooperation, conflict resolution and reconciliation skills, as well as deliver messages relating to health, HIV and AIDS prevention, the environment and the risks posed by mines and other remnants of war.

Develop the technical capacity of local implementing partners to manage and deliver sport-based programmes.

Engage youth as community educators and participants in projects that will establish their role as critical forces for recovery in resource-poor communities.

2.6 Policy Advocacy

Sport for Development offers tremendous opportunities for UNICEF to push for policy changes that support the right to play and the inclusion of sport in education.

Sport can be a low-cost, high-impact tool for furthering a wide range of development objectives, in particular the MDGs. However, with a few exceptions, the use of sport to advance these goals has largely been limited to small-scale projects, often developed at the margins of existing government policy and programme frameworks. These typically enjoy limited funding, capacity and prospects for long-term sustainability.

SPORT IN POST-EARTHQUAKE REHABILITATION IN HAITI

Some 1.3 million people remain displaced in the aftermath of the earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010, many of them children who continue to struggle with the severe stress caused by the loss of their homes, friends and relations, and community life.

To help children address this trauma and rebuild relationships, UNICEF and the Haitian Olympic Committee (HOC) set up a psychosocial sports programme in 52 ‘tent cities’ around Port-au-Prince, reaching 50,000 children in vulnerable communities. The Monaco-based organization Peace and Sport provides additional support.

The sport programme is modelled on an elementary school physical education class: children learn how to block each other in basketball, perform karate kicks, play handball and take part in cooperative games. Activities are conducted by ‘camp leaders’ who volunteer their time, acting as facilitators, organizing cultural events, preparing recreational areas, storing materials and equipment and motivating families to participate.5

“The kids … really like this programme because it’s a way to forget exactly what happened. And it’s a way for them to forget their situation under the tents,” says HOC Assistant Programme Coordinator Stéphane Rébu.

Former child soldiers play football with UNICEF Advocate for Children Affected by War Ishmael Beah outside a UNICEF-assisted transit centre for the children, in the town of N’délé, capital of the Central African Republic’s northern Bamingui-Bangoran Prefecture. ©UNICEF/NYHQ2012-1163/BRIAN SOKOL
To fully harness sport’s potential, the necessary policies, investment and capacity must be in place so that programmes can be scaled up on a national or regional basis.

In several instances, UNICEF has successfully advocated with governments to incorporate sport into national education strategies. In Azerbaijan, for example, *International Inspiration (II)*, of which UNICEF UK is a partner, has supported the development of two major national strategies aimed to make sport accessible for all young people – the *Strategy Plan for Athletics Development (2009-12)*, and the long-term *National Strategy on Physical Education and Sport Development (2009-20)*.63 In India, it has collaborated with the government to introduce *Physical Education Cards (PECs)*,64 teaching aids that enable non-specialists to deliver student-centred, quality physical education in primary schools.
Historically, there have been few opportunities for children and adolescents in Brazil to take part in organized and inclusive sports in and outside school. While sport has always been a popular pastime among Brazilians, the concept of sport and play as both a right and a development tool has received little recognition in the past, rarely extending beyond its ability to distract children from risky behaviors.

Since 2007, UNICEF Brazil has been promoting the **Sports and Citizenship Challenge** as part of the “UNICEF Municipal Seal of Approval Initiative” (*the Selo*), which is awarded to municipalities that successfully improve social indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other indicators directly related to the social participation of children and adolescents. Participating municipalities are encouraged to overcome development challenges within a specific timeframe. In the first cycle of the Selo initiative (2007-2009), 1,128 mayors of the Semiarid region signed up to participate, committing their communities to improving social indicators for children and adolescents. In the second cycle (2009-2012) UNICEF extended the Sport and Citizenship Challenge and *the Selo* methodology to the Amazon region, during which an additional 783 municipalities of the Semiarid and Amazon regions participated. The international recognition that the municipalities receive for putting children at the heart of public policy has made *the Selo* awards quite prestigious.


- 468,000 children and adolescents participated in **Sports and Citizenship** festivals in 585 municipalities of the Semiarid region. Some 7,650 teachers, public officers, children and adolescents participated in workshops, public hearings and in 625 sport festivals that promoted the right of children to play and participate in safe and inclusive sports.

  - Increased municipal budgets towards the promotion of safe and inclusive sports. For example, in 2009 the municipality of Pesqueira invested R$ 127,000 into sports policies, compared to R$ 6,000 in 2008. In the same year, the municipality of Belo Jardim quadrupled its sports budget.

  - Increased number of professional PE teachers hired by municipal governments.

  - Improved teaching practices.

**STRATEGIES THAT WORKED**

Through *the Selo* methodology, UNICEF has been providing technical support since 2007 to municipal governments and civil society organizations to promote the right to play safe and inclusive sports for children and adolescents. Participating municipalities are provided with specific guidelines/manuals on how to develop participative sports policies at the municipal level. Proposed activities include the creation of multi-sectoral **Sports and Citizenship** working groups, the development of sporting initiatives through integrated sports and communication plans, and encouraging the exchange of good practices among municipalities. Sports festivals and public events are also organized to mobilize the general public and to increase awareness on the importance of safe and inclusive sports.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Integrate relationship-building mechanisms into methodology.** Create mechanisms and platforms for information-sharing among different stakeholders and partners at the municipal level to create synergies, build relationships and identify opportunities for collaboration. The people responsible for developing sports plans should be from different sectors – e.g., sport, child health, child rights – so that the programme can have a broader impact and becomes more sustainable.

  - **Look for innovative ways to train and build capacity at the municipal level.** Experience shows that while sports and citizenship guidelines, training and videos developed by UNICEF Brazil are essential tools for capacity-building, a key component of the initiative is to develop a relationship of trust and credibility between UNICEF and municipal actors, with continuous monitoring of the process. In a country the size of Brazil, which has 9 UNICEF offices, this means decentralizing activities so that the office closest to the participating municipality can have ongoing relationships with and provide support to the local government.

  - **Involve adolescents.** When children and adolescents are aware of their rights and have the opportunity to actively participate in the development of municipal plans, they will advocate for these initiatives to be sustained and demand opportunities for sport in their schools and communities, thus influencing public policies.
Girls laugh together, standing on a field at Guillermo Prospero Trinidad Stadium, in Oranjestad, Aruba’s capital. They are participating in a programme offered by Athletik Bond, a local government-sponsored organization that coaches children in track and field sports. ©UNICEF/NYHQ2011-1854/ROGER LEMOYNE
3.1 Gender Equality

While sport plays a central role in most societies, girls often participate far less than boys. Entrenched attitudes about what constitutes appropriate physical activity for girls, a lack of safe and separate facilities, cultural barriers, and domestic demands on girls are contributing factors that can limit their participation or result in their exclusion from sports. For example, beliefs about girls’ strengths and capacities, or myths about the impact of physical activity on girls’ reproductive health, can limit their access to sport and play activities. In addition, in many poor families, girls shoulder income-generating or household chores (such as collecting water or taking care of younger siblings).

Using sport as a tool of inclusion is often overlooked. Yet sport can significantly contribute to the well-being of girls by giving them opportunities to learn new skills, develop confidence and self-esteem, socialize with friends and reduce isolation. Sport can provide girls with inspirational role models and help them develop leadership skills.66 Sport is also an excellent tool for increasing girls’ body awareness and confidence, which is particularly important during puberty.

The United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative

A group of children play with their teacher during a class break in a village in the Maradi region, the southeastern part of Niger. UNICEF supported the building of the primary school and promotes girls’ education, as well as providing school supplies to this child friendly school. ©UNICEF/NIGE2010-0082/GIACOMO PIROZZI

CHALLENGES TO GIRLS’ PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS

Challenge #1: Misperceptions and prejudices about girls and sports. Many cultures view sport as a male domain and consider the qualities associated with athleticism, such as strength and competitiveness, as “masculine.”68 Despite the increase of women athletes at all levels, from grassroots activities to the Olympic Games, girls are often barred from watching and participating in sports. In many traditional societies, a girl can be condemned for showing her skin in athletic clothing or raising her leg to kick a ball. When femininity is associated with being petite or soft, girls are often reluctant to build muscle mass.69 These attitudes about roles are imposed on girls and, over time, adopted by the girls themselves.

Challenge #2: Sports apparel for girls. Many societies impose constraints on what is considered appropriate attire for girls. In tradition-bound and religious societies, expectations frequently include modest dress, often covering legs, arms and/or hair. This can make participation in sports challenging for girls from both a practical and a psychological standpoint. Similarly, if a girl feels like she is shaming her family for wearing a swimsuit in public, she is not likely to want to swim. It can be dangerous for a girl to behave in a way that is perceived as inappropriate; if she does, she risks being punished, threatened or prevented from moving around freely.

Challenge #3: Scheduling. Girls, especially those living in poverty, are often responsible for assisting in the home, including watching children, doing chores, cooking and cleaning. Many adolescent girls fill the rest of their day in school or working paid jobs. Participation in a sports programme might not fit easily into a young woman’s already full schedule.

Challenge #4: Fears that sports will cause the loss of virginity. A common myth in some cultures is that physical exertion, such as running, kicking or jumping, will cause a girl’s hymen to tear. An intact hymen is erroneously seen as a physical indicator of virginity. In societies where a girl’s virginity before marriage is sacred, the threat of sports causing a tear can be a very serious concern.

Challenge #5: Menstruation. Sanitary pads and tampons are expensive and are not a financial priority for many families, especially in traditional cultures or among economically disadvantaged families.71 When girls begin to menstruate, they are often confined to their homes and temporarily or totally cease participation in sport. Girls fear bleeding in front of others and often have misunderstandings about the safety of participating in sports while menstruating. In addition, in order for girls to use tampons safely, they must be educated about the risks associated with prolonged use.

Challenge #6: Facilities. The lack of separate washing, changing and latrine facilities for girls in many sports settings is a significant barrier to their participation in sports.

Adapted from the International Guide to Designing Sport Programmes for Girls72, a how-to manual designed by Women Win to help develop effective, sustainable sports programmes for girls and women. Women Win connects the global sport, development and women’s movements, working closely with local partners to strengthen their capacity to support the rights of girls and women locally and globally.
UNGEI has recognized the value of sport as a tool for empowering girls and addressing gender inequalities, and has been an important partner with UNICEF in this regard.67 Ensuring that girls participate in sport is a potent way to challenge gender norms about what they can and can’t do; this, in turn, can help reduce restrictions on girls’ mobility and improve their access to public spaces.

Sport for Development and Peace initiatives can connect girls to information, skills and strategies they need to reduce health risks throughout their lives, particularly regarding their sexual and reproductive health. Equally important, sport gives girls an opportunity to have fun and enjoy their childhood.

In order to create an inclusive sport programme that targets girls, the challenges that hinder their participation must be taken into consideration. To illustrate some of these challenges, the box below outlines obstacles encountered by partner Women Win,68 a global organization that empowers girls and women through sport.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION**

The following are recommendations to help UNICEF country offices address misconceptions and obstacles to girls’ participation in sport.

Wearing an armband bearing the UNICEF logo, a girl smiles before the start of a football match between her team and another all-girls team in Dalga Arena in Baku, Azerbaijan’s capital. Together with the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan, UNICEF sponsors a football league for girls who, in turn, help raise awareness of children’s rights and promote positive behaviour change among their peers. ©UNICEF/NYHQ2011-1650/GIACOMO PIROZZI
- **Educate.** Education is a powerful tool for countering negative attitudes about girls’ participation in sports programmes. Teaching girls and boys, caregivers and community members about the health and social benefits of physical activity for a young woman can help change perceptions.

- **Show images of women athletes** or host events where programme participants are able to interact with a champion female athlete who is a positive role model.

- **Invite caregivers, teachers and community members to visit the programme in action** and to talk about their concerns.

- **Address safety and modesty concerns.** Assure all involved that each girl is safe at all times while she is participating in the programme. Provide appropriate facilities, such as a walled playing area, if necessary, as well as separate changing, washing and latrine facilities for girls.

- **Talk openly with girls** about perceptions of women athletes and encourage them to care more about themselves and what makes them happy, and less about what others think of them.

- **Enlist the support of male athletes,** professionals or tribal elders who are respected in the community. Their support can help to defuse myths and solicit support from other community members.

- **Use local pride as a motivator.** For example, in Peru, where people are proud of the past achievement at the Olympics of their women’s national volleyball team, a sports programme that emphasizes volleyball has greater chances of success.

- **Be explicit about incorporating gender equality into programming.** Gender equality was a prominent component in the design of a large scale, multi-sport programme in India, Panchayaat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA). Female coaches and leaders provide excellent role models for girls; to ensure a 50 per cent ratio of female coaches in the PYKKA programme, at least one of the two kridashree (volunteer sports coaches) in each village must be female.73

The heart of working with sports is giving girls a chance to be children – it allows them to move, have fun and play. But more than that, it teaches them to give expression to their ideas and raise their concerns, set goals for themselves, work together and support each other.

Nuzhat Shahzadi, Chief West Field Office, UNICEF Afghanistan
Ensure that S4D initiatives are girl-friendly:

- **Timing:** Matches should take place before dusk, with appropriate arrangements for transport and escorting/chaperoning procedures in place if needed;
- **Safety:** Measures that can be taken to make it safer for girls to participate in sports programmes include: improving public lighting; providing separate latrines and changing rooms; scheduling activities during times of the day when it is safer to move around; and organizing sports activities in safe areas and/or in areas close to participants’ homes so they do not have to travel long distances.74

For further guidance on choosing the right sport, building support, creating safe spaces, recruiting girls, developing leadership, training coaches, and addressing sensitive topics such as gender-based violence, refer to the Women Win International Guide to Designing Sport Programmes for Girls.75

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**INNOVATION IN AFGHANISTAN:**
**UNGEI’S GIRLS’ SPORTS FORUM PROMOTES GIRLS’ RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION THROUGH SPORT**

**CONTEXT**
In Afghanistan, girls have few opportunities to enjoy play and sport in a safe and supportive environment. At puberty, play becomes even more limited, as gender norms restrict girls’ physical movement and their ability to give voice to their concerns and ideas. At this age, many girls also become vulnerable to child slavery and debt bondage practices. These practices are technically illegal but are often disguised as marriage, labour or family affairs that do not require state intervention. As part of a broader strategy to address children’s rights in Afghanistan, the first Girls’ Sports Forum (GSF) was established in 2009 in Herat province to help girls realize their right to play, to health and to education.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS**
- Since the first school piloted the GSF in 2009, it has rapidly expanded to 20 schools, with over 2000 girls participating. In each forum, girls aged 11-18 take part in structured sport activities and guided discussions about their health, future and rights. To date, approximately 30 peer leaders are coaching younger girls on their rights, paying particular attention to the rights to play, health and freedom of speech.

- Sport has created a friendly and open forum for girls to share their experiences and concerns. By using sports as a tool for stimulating open discussions, UNICEF staff have been able to learn more about girls’ experiences, concerns and gaps in understanding. In response, they have provided the girls with information about their health and human rights, and taught vital life skills such as leadership, self-confidence and the capacity to dream and set goals.

While the GSF has played a significant role in shifting gender norms among the girls, the UNICEF Country Office recognized the need to adapt programming to address social norms. For example, staff established a Code of Conduct for working with girls and led courtyard meetings with community leaders and parents to address their safety concerns.

Girls’ participation and leadership have proved to be critical components of the programme’s success. Girls select the sports they want to learn and are trained as peer mentors. They choose the issues that they want to address, such as menstrual hygiene and reproductive health – topics that are considered taboo and difficult to address openly. Given the reality that many young girls will soon be married, maternal health issues are also discussed, including hygiene, sanitation, immunization and nutrition. The GSF members have taken over the management and oversight of the forum in their respective schools. UNICEF continues to give technical support by providing sports equipment, paving playgrounds and providing guidance on girls’ rights to health and education.76
3.2 Social Inclusion

Social exclusion comprises a series of deprivations of economic, social, gender, cultural and political rights. A child can be excluded based on a variety of socio-political factors – including religion, gender, ethnicity, language, geographic location and physical ability – which result in discrimination and disadvantage within society.

Children’s exclusion from essential services and goods, such as adequate food, healthcare and schooling, clearly affects their ability to participate in their communities and societies in both the present and the future.

Sometimes the factors that produce exclusion can be compounded and exacerbated by child protection abuses or the state’s neglect of children living outside of traditional family structures. In such cases, exclusion can become so extreme that children become invisible – denied their rights, unable to attend school and obscured from official view through absence from statistics, policies and programmes.77

Sport can provide a way to break down barriers and promote inclusion of children who are often left on the sidelines. Full participation in sport activities can benefit people who are usually excluded in two ways:

- **By changing community perceptions of the capability of different groups:** Through sport, children – regardless of gender, ability or background – can come together in a positive context (sometimes for the first time) and see each other accomplish things they had previously thought impossible. This helps reduce stigma and discrimination and changes the attitude of gatekeepers who have the power to permit or deny children the right to take part in physical activity.

- **By changing children’s perceptions of themselves and their abilities:** Sport empowers children to recognize their own potential and advocate for changes in society to enable them to fully realize that potential.

**Promoting the participation of children with disabilities as an example of inclusion**

People living with disabilities constitute approximately 10 per cent of the global population. Of this total, 80 per cent live in low-income countries; most are poor and have limited or no access to basic services, including rehabilitation facilities.

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Above all, we need to come together as a global community and fully commit ourselves to reaching the hardest to reach. For there can be no true progress in human development unless its benefits are shared – and to some degree, driven – by the most vulnerable among us.

Anthony Lake, UNICEF Executive Director
The Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms that every child – regardless of ability – has the right to engage in play and recreational activities; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol states that countries must “ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access with other persons to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities, including those activities in the school system.” (Art. 30) Today, the majority of children with disabilities, particularly in developing countries, cannot exercise their right to take part in sport; this translates into limited opportunities for them to reap both the individual and social benefits that participation in sport confers.

UNICEF uses the term “disability” in line with the definition provided in the CRPD: “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.” (Art. 1) UNICEF’s approach to disability is based on the social model of disability, which focuses on barriers posed to persons with disabilities by their environment (rather than by their bodily impairment). These barriers include the attitudes and prejudices of society, policies and practices of governments, and the structures of the health, welfare and education systems.

The social model of disability proposes that it is these systemic barriers and negative attitudes that ultimately define who is included and excluded in
a particular sport activity. This inclusion model also recognizes that while some people have physical, sensory, intellectual or psychological differences, these, too, are not the cause of exclusion from sport. Rather, the barriers are caused by: a lack of early experiences with sport and structured play by children with disabilities; a lack of understanding by coaches and leaders of how to include children with disabilities in sport; and attitudes of parents, coaches and teachers of children with disabilities about their ability to participate. For example, wheelchair users do not play rugby in many parts of the world because there is no appropriate version of the game modified to suit wheelchair users; it is not because they can’t kick, pass or push their wheelchair around a rugby field.

Exclusion from sport and play activities should therefore be viewed as the result of the social norms and other barriers in the external environment, not the person’s gender, disability or other circumstance.

Participation in sport, recreation and play can be especially valuable in fighting marginalization and achieving greater inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream society; it also provides communities with opportunities to learn and benefit from acceptance of differences.

While the number of children with disabilities participating in sport, recreation, and adapted physical activity today is quite low, the figure is slowly on the rise worldwide due to an increase in understanding, opportunities, and the visibility of mega sport events like the Paralympic Games, Special Olympics World Games and Deaflympics.

UNICEF works with partners, including organizations led by persons with disabilities (Disabled Persons’
Organizations, or DPOs), civil society organizations, National Paralympic Committees, sport federations and governments to: support the right of all children to play, recreation and sport; raise awareness and address stigma and discrimination faced by children with disabilities; and to provide inclusive opportunities for children with and without disabilities to engage with each other, learn to live together and respect one another.

One of UNICEF’s global partners in this area is Special Olympics (SO). In October 2012, both organizations became formal members of the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities, a network of more than 100 organizations, including international NGOs, national/local NGOs, Disabled People’s Organizations (DPOs), governments, academia and the private sector. The global partnership, works to advance the rights of children with disabilities at the global, regional and country levels. With a rights-based approach, the partnership provides a platform for advocacy and collective action to ensure the rights of children with disabilities are included and prioritized by both the disability and child rights movements. This partnership builds upon the ongoing work that UNICEF and Special Olympics are carrying out at the global and country level to uphold the rights, dignity and inclusion of children with disabilities, including the delivery of sport-based programmes that promote the health, education, participation and dignity of children with disabilities. For example, in Europe in 2010, SO and UNICEF Poland provided training on children’s rights to participants at a Youth Forum that preceded the Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Regional Games. In Bulgaria, UNICEF partnered with SO to launch the “Invisible Children” campaign, which aimed to change public opinion towards children with disabilities.

UNICEF and SO partners also collaborate to deliver free health screenings and services in vision, oral health, nutrition counselling and physical therapy, as well as to establish Family Support Networks that provide a forum for discussion, advocacy and learning among families with children with intellectual disabilities.

UNICEF also works with national organizations to promote sport for all children. For example:

- In Azerbaijan, special summer camps for adolescents organized by the Youth Organizations of Azerbaijan (NAYORA) and supported by the government of Azerbaijan and UNICEF focus on offering fully inclusive opportunities for children with and without disabilities to play together, learn together and live together.

- In Chechnya, UNICEF and the NGO Laman Az (“Voice of the Mountains”) created football teams for young men who have lost a limb to landmines during the region’s two decades of conflict. UNICEF provided the players with basic equipment and restored training facilities.
In Jordan’s Souf refugee camp, home to 20,000 people, children with disabilities are now fully participating in weekly sport sessions supported by International Inspiration.

In Malaysia, UNICEF promoted inclusion by supporting a national football league, Football for All, which allowed children with visual, hearing and intellectual disabilities to play football in a structured and supportive environment.

In Brazil, in partnership with Sesame Street, UNICEF developed multi-media kits to engage children, parents and caregivers in fun activities that promote sport as a tool for social inclusion.

### 3.3 Participation

Several provisions in the Convention on the Rights of the Child reflect children’s right to participation. Article 12 states that children have the right to express their views and participate in decision-making processes that are relevant in their lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard within the family, the school or the community. It recognizes the potential of children to enrich decision-making processes, to share perspectives and to participate as citizens and actors of change.82

Sport by its very nature is about participation. Participation should be understood as more than

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**STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE INCLUSION OF EVERY CHILD**

- **Changing equipment, rules, or environment**: Various aspects of sport activities can be adapted – such as rules, equipment and the size of the playing area – so that all children can participate and play together. When modifying an activity for an individual child, it is important to involve the child in deciding what modifications are needed.

- **Implementing sport activities in a public arena**: Making sport activities visible to the broader community helps to shift social norms. For example, demonstrating how fast a child with a disability can swim or how a girl can referee a football game shifts the focus to children’s abilities and challenges assumptions about ability.

- **Same-sex programming**: Conducting sport in a forum that is inaccessible to boys can be a useful way to help girls build confidence in their skills and address issues related to gender equity. At the same time, male-only activities have proved to be a useful forum for addressing the challenges that are specific to boys.

- **Involving parents in programme design**: In many countries, parent meetings have been held during the design phase of programmes to highlight the benefits of children’s involvement, address parents’ safety concerns (particularly concerns for girls or children with disabilities), and discuss how children’s responsibilities at home and elsewhere can be accommodated to allow for their participation (particularly girls who may have domestic duties).
simply inviting children to engage in sport and play activities. Rather, it is a framework that informs the meaningful involvement of children’s perspectives and ideas in the planning, delivery and evaluation of activities. As a matter of principle, children and young people should be given opportunities to take part in the design and implementation of UNICEF-assisted S4D initiatives. This can be approached in two ways:

**Who participates:** Sport and play can be used to increase the participation of the most disadvantaged children, such as children with disabilities or children who are not enrolled in school. Increasingly, efforts to improve participation through sport are also targeting adolescents. Sport is also a good forum for promoting dialogue between children and the adults who facilitate their participation.

**How children participate:** Children can participate in different ways, according to their evolving capacities. Adolescence is a critical period for encouraging participation. At this stage, participation can lead to increased feelings of efficacy and improved understanding of one’s role and responsibilities in the community and broader society.83

**Suggestions for Action**

The questions below suggest ways to ensure that sport initiatives promote meaningful child and adolescent participation.

- Do all children, regardless of their gender, abilities or school enrolment status, have the chance to have their views heard and contribute to the decision-making process?
- Are children consulted in a child-friendly, safe and protective setting and with the proper training so that they are confident about expressing their views? Are their ideas treated with respect and acted upon?
- Is the children’s participation meaningful, rather than tokenistic?
- Is there an environment of mutual respect and trust between children and adults?
- Are girls and boys given equal opportunities to participate?
- Are children given feedback and able to see the results of their contributions?
- Do boys and girls have equal opportunities to make decisions and assume leadership roles?
- What opportunities exist to help children assume responsibility for the process and outcomes?
- Do children who are out of school have access to sport and play programmes through youth groups or other community outreach initiatives?
Student serves during volleyball game in the yard at Kalas Girls Primary School, in Uganda’s Amudat District. Some of the girls enrolled in the school after hearing about the ‘Back to School’ campaign.
4.1 Major Sport Events

Major sport events have broad and far-reaching influence: they convene large and diverse groups of people, bring corporate and public sectors together, attract media, sponsorship, merchandise and ticketing income, and incite public discussion and debate. These qualities make sporting events valuable platforms for collaboration, and present numerous opportunities for UNICEF.

These events may showcase a single sport – like the ICC Cricket World Cup, FIFA World Cup, UEFA football championships or LEN European Swimming Championships – or they may involve multiple sports, such as the Olympic Summer and Winter Games, the Paralympic and Special Olympics, or the Commonwealth Games. These events are governed by an international sport federation (e.g. FIFA or the International Olympic or Paralympics Committees) and are organized by an association established specifically for that purpose, called a host organizing committee. Major sports events can also have a national focus, such as Major League Baseball’s World Series and the National Basketball Association’s finals in the United States, or feature youth participation.

There are few mediums as powerful and as widely-watched as major sport competitions, which attract billions of fans and spectators, both at the games themselves and via television and the Internet. The in-home television coverage of the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa, for example, reached over 3.2 billion people around the world – 46.4 per cent of the global population. During that World Cup, FIFA’s official website attracted over 250 million visits, triggering seven billion page views. A year later, the ICC 2011 Cricket World Cup attracted a television audience of more than two billion people.

The ability of athletes and teams to capture the attention of global and local media and vast fan bases is one of the most compelling aspects of sport partnerships for UNICEF. It makes them potent vehicles for UNICEF to raise awareness among the public about issues affecting children, advocate for policy change, convey messages aimed at altering behaviour, create opportunities for fundraising, and build the UNICEF brand. In addition, bringing live viewing of major sporting events to rural areas through innovative technologies can be a catalyst to unite children and young people, as well as to provide an opportunity for them to learn about key children’s rights issues.

For example, the “World Cup in My Village” initiative organized by UNICEF, the Children’s Radio Foundation and local partners during the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, channeled the power of...
football – not only to beam this global sporting event to poor and far-flung communities, but also to tap into the talents of young people in order to raise awareness about key social issues. Workshops were held to train youth journalists, who then interviewed people before the matches and produced short radio stories on issues such as education that were broadcast to local community stations. The initiative then used large open-air screens and projectors to show the World Cup matches in local communities that had no other means of watching the games.87

On a national level, UNICEF India and the Delhi Daredevils have come together to help empower girls in India. The partnership with the cricket team aims to support efforts to protect millions of adolescent girls who face various forms of discrimination, exploitation and abuse. This “Dare to Care” effort focuses on issues related to empowering girls through education, giving them the strength to say no to early marriage and the power to take decisions which directly impact their lives.

At major sport events such as World Cups, Olympic Games, Special Olympics, and the African Cup of Nations, UNICEF has leveraged sport platforms to:

- Use legacy initiatives to integrate sport as a tool to contribute to MTSP focus areas;
- Convey messages promoting behavioural change;
- Promote fundraising opportunities;
- Consider potential health and protection risks to children and young people and mitigate them.

Legacy initiatives

Committing to a legacy of sustainable social development has become an integral part of the bid process to host major sport events. Although social development has historically been part of a bid team or organizing committee’s voluntary action, *International Inspiration*, the social development component of the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games, was the first to do this on a major scale in partnership with UNICEF. The goal of this groundbreaking global legacy programme was to enrich the lives of 12 million children and young people of all abilities across 20 countries through the power of high-quality and inclusive physical education, sport and play. Led for UNICEF by UNICEF UK, this effort worked on three levels – with policy makers, sports practitioners and children and adolescents – to change the way countries are promoting the role of sport in schools and communities. As a result of this landmark initiative, most bids for major sports events now incorporate some level of commitment to social development.
Eyes are turning toward Brazil – the upcoming host of the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympic Games – to see how International Inspiration has passed the social development torch. UNICEF Brazil is using these mega-events to advocate for the development of sports policies for children and adolescents, placing schools in Brazil at the heart of the community life during the mega-events and strengthening the relationship among children, parents, teachers and communities. The Brazil Country Office works in close collaboration with relevant ministries and sports entities – such as Brazil’s National Human Rights Secretariat (SDH), the Ministry of Sports, Ministry of Education and the Brazilian Paralympic Committee – to support the elaboration and implementation of educational sports policies and child-friendly social legacy plans for the upcoming events. UNICEF’s technical support to the government is aimed at increasing transparency and social participation. The office is also participating in preparatory committees for the mega-events and provides guidance and support on how to develop child and adolescent-friendly sports policies and how to put children and adolescents at the centre of the social legacy plans underway.

While Brazil may be hosting the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games, there are opportunities to leverage on these upcoming events throughout the Latin America and Caribbean region. TACRO, UNICEF’s Regional Office, is working to inspire and mobilize communities, municipalities, the private sector and governments to provide opportunities for children to exercise safe and inclusive sports and play, engaging in partnerships with athletes, sport organizations and local governments.

When municipalities prioritize investment in the creation and maintenance of safe and appropriate playgrounds and public spaces, they become the main drivers towards safe and inclusive sports for children. UNICEF TACRO is using its communication platform to engage mayors throughout the region to invest in safe playing spaces for children. At the same time, children and young people are asked to comment through social media on how the lack of safe and adequate spaces to play within and outside school affects their lives.
Sport events as platforms for Communication for Development (C4D)

Sport events are unique opportunities for large groups of people to come together and share a common experience in a positive, exciting environment. In doing so, they provide opportunities for mass communication, attract high-level decision makers, create possibilities for side meetings related to Sport for Development, attract interest from the private sector and give opportunities for positive role modeling. Public service announcements, in-stadium videos and banners, half-time shows, publications and event websites, and the use of sport celebrities to communicate messages are just some of the ways sport events have been used to advance advocacy, branding and communication objectives. At the 2007 Afro-Asia Cup, for example, the Asian Cricket Council donated one-third of the boundary boards to UNICEF to draw attention to the “Unite for Children, Unite Against AIDS” campaign.
Sport events as fundraising platforms

Sport events attract revenue through sponsorship, merchandising, ticket sales and media rights. Details and examples of how UNICEF has been able to leverage fundraising opportunities from these revenue streams are outlined in section 4.3 below.

Mitigating risks at major sport events

Major sporting events create many opportunities, but not all of them are positive. They can create conditions that put children at greater risk of trafficking and exploitation, and where there are increased opportunities for risky health behaviour that can spread HIV and AIDS. In recognition of these hazards, UNICEF seeks to mitigate risks associated with major sporting events. For example, during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, UNICEF launched two initiatives, the Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) and the Red Card campaign, which used the imagery of the red penalty card in football to alert children, local communities and visitors to the dangers of child exploitation and abuse during the games. An important outcome of this initiative was that an adapted CFS model was developed for use in future disaster and emergency contexts in South Africa, and all nine provinces in the country developed comprehensive child protection plans to counter risks linked to the World Cup.

Key considerations for leveraging major sport events

As is the case with other UNICEF-supported sport initiatives, the platform of major sports events is most effective when the partners have invested the time and resources to get to know one another. This means having a clear understanding of their own and their partners’ priorities and plans, knowing what resources
each partner brings and what outcomes are expected, and having a clear grasp of the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

Here are some key considerations for working with major sport events:

- **Identify UNICEF objectives for partnership.** UNICEF may wish to use a major sports event to further programmatic objectives, such as child protection or HIV and AIDS education, or it may see opportunities for advocacy, fundraising or Communication for Development. It is important to note that for some events, UNICEF objectives will fall across a range of areas. In these situations a UNICEF coordination point should be established.

- **Know partners’ priorities.** The relevant sport governing body (e.g. International Cricket Council or FIFA) and the host organizing committee (e.g. the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games) will each have priorities and aims for the sport event. Dedicate time and resources to understand if and how UNICEF’s goals can be accommodated within partners’ plans. Fundraising should not be UNICEF’s number one priority when approaching either the governing body or organizing committee for partnerships.

- **Know UNICEF’s history with the event or similar events.** Having a thorough knowledge of UNICEF’s past experience with a specific or similar major sport event will help determine realistic objectives, the effective allocation of resources and the best approaches to implementation. Partners may also be able to contribute best practices and lessons learned from previous partnerships.

- **Allocate resources and define roles.** Have a good understanding of what resources UNICEF can commit to the partnership, and what resources the partners will contribute. Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of each partner have been clearly established.

- **Choose the most effective platform.** Most large-scale events have many sponsors involved and it can be a challenge for UNICEF to compete for visibility, especially against agencies that are paying large sums for branding rights. In many cases, the supporting events to the main event may be better platforms for UNICEF’s purposes, as there are fewer competing sponsors. Such events include torch or baton relays, qualifying events, associated cultural events, festivals for spectators, pre-event friendly games and meetings and summits attended by key decision makers.

- **Identify timelines and work plans with partners.** Like any activity, UNICEF’s partnerships with sport events should be integrated into the Annual Work Plan. A local organizing committee (LOC) will be established up to four years before the event and will usually have clear timelines for delivery of specific milestones. Engage as early as possible with the LOC to identify critical events that are taking place and the decision points that lead up to these events, including information about branding and communication opportunities, deadlines for press credentials, etc.
- Make sure the key messages are simple, easy to understand and relevant for the target audience. In the case of large events where many agencies are conveying diverse messages, it is usually most effective to repeat the same message through a variety of different avenues rather than attempt to convey a range of messages. Messaging should be simplified when briefing players and media who do not have a background in children’s rights or familiarity with UNICEF issues. Create relevant links between the event’s core business (for example football at the FIFA World Cup) and UNICEF’s messaging.

- Cultivate relationships with celebrities in advance of events. In order to ensure that players and sport-related celebrities can give informed, interesting responses about UNICEF to the media at major sport events, they should have had exposure to UNICEF programmes and key messages well in advance of the event. Giving players the opportunity to visit UNICEF activities enables them to communicate messages more authentically.

- Integrate monitoring and evaluation and debriefing into partnership work plans. Ensure that resources have been earmarked for evaluation of the partnership at the conclusion of an event. Document best practices and lessons learned. Events usually occur on a cyclical basis, and while the geography may vary, the actors and target audience will be similar. It is therefore important to share information about UNICEF’s involvement in the event with other National Committees and country offices that may be involved in the event in the future.

- Establish a relationship with the bid or local organizing committee. The local organizing committee and/or the relevant sport federation are the key groups to contact to get involved in the event. These groups may also be able to give information about other partners that are already involved, such as: international governing organizations; another NGO or community-based organization that has an interest in the event; a sponsor of the games; a local group whose work is impacted by the games; or groups who are bidding for major events. Some sponsors are interested in being involved with the event from a corporate social responsibility viewpoint and will therefore seek out UNICEF for brand association. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for UNICEF to form

When an organization like UNICEF needs your help to change the future for young people across the world, you jump at the opportunity to get involved. I am very fortunate to have a fantastic group of supporters worldwide who I hope will care as much as I do about the survival and development of the children who need our help the most.

Rory McIlroy, Ambassador for UNICEF Ireland
a partnership directly with these organizations and run an initiative in parallel with the event, rather than in direct collaboration with the LOC.

- **Link in with the local organizing committee’s communications systems.** Most major events have an extensive network of media contacts as well as a very sophisticated media information distribution system on the ground at events. They maintain intranet sites, which all journalists check on a daily basis in the media centres at event venues. It is therefore essential to make sure UNICEF press releases or press events are integrated into this network. Conversely, this network is a valuable resource for UNICEF communications officers, as it gives information about events and opportunities for UNICEF to link into.

### 4.2 Working with Sport Celebrities

The broad appeal of present and former sport stars makes them excellent ambassadors to deliver simple, powerful messages on behalf of UNICEF. Sport celebrities can raise the profile of UNICEF’s work among target audiences and spread messages that can help children and young people gain a better understanding of issues that affect them and make positive changes in their behaviour. They can be influential role models that inspire and motivate. In addition to having a powerful influence on children, sport celebrities can also speak on behalf of them, advocating in favour of children’s rights, as well as helping to engage new audiences in support of UNICEF’s work.

Sport celebrities may be involved as international UNICEF Goodwill Ambassadors, or Regional or National Ambassadors. Sport celebrities who do not have a formal association with UNICEF may also lend their support to UNICEF initiatives, particularly at the community level. UNICEF has worked with such celebrities as footballers David Beckham of Britain and Lionel Messi of Argentina, basketball players Pau Gasol of Spain and Samuel Dalembert of Haiti, tennis players Novak Djokovic and Ana Ivanovic of Serbia and Serena Williams of the United States, and golfer Rory McIlroy of Ireland.

There are many benefits to working with sport celebrities, but there are also potential risks. Sometimes, the behaviour they exhibit in their professional or personal lives can make them poor or unreliable...
role models. Furthermore, in an environment where the public is becoming more cynical about celebrity endorsements, both of products and of charitable causes, celebrities increasingly need to be able to demonstrate authenticity and long-term commitment to the causes they represent.

This section summarizes how UNICEF works with sport celebrities. Please refer to the Guide to Working with Goodwill Ambassadors on the UNICEF Intranet for more specific instructions on working with celebrities.

**Promoting UNICEF development objectives**

Sport celebrities may be involved in a wide range of activities that help promote UNICEF’s programmes, including events, workshops and visits to the field. An athlete can motivate children and young people to participate in sport or deliver messages that inspire them to make positive changes in their behaviours and attitudes that protect their health, safety and rights. For example, UNICEF Namibia recently launched a cartoon booklet by former middle distance runner and UNICEF Namibia Goodwill Ambassador Agnes Samaria called, “From Living Healthy to Meeting the World.” The booklet was conceived to support life skills activities for children and adolescents and to use Samaria’s example to inspire Namibian youth to overcome setbacks and strive for success.

**Advocacy**

Sport celebrities are often well positioned to deliver messages that attract media and public interest to UNICEF causes. This is particularly the case around major events such as the FIFA World Cup, Olympic Games and local events. Athletes can also recruit other team members, peers or coaches to raise awareness of UNICEF’s work. UNICEF’s objective should be to
utilize their extensive relationship networks to engage and educate the public at the community, national and global level.

For example, in recent years Goodwill Ambassador David Beckham has, on behalf of UNICEF, visited UK Prime Minister David Cameron, urging him to make a commitment to reduce undernutrition and stunting; made a surprise visit to a UNICEF-supported children’s shelter in Manila; and posted an appeal for help to support UNICEF’s efforts to save Somalian children dying of hunger.

**Fundraising**

Sport celebrities can deliver powerful messages that help raise funds for UNICEF programmes. This is especially timely when the public’s attention is focused on sport events involving that athlete. Sport celebrities can also be a good draw at fundraising events, especially if donors have a particular interest in that sport. Samuel Dalembert and Roger Federer have both used their celebrity status to help raise funds for UNICEF.

Some sport celebrities also donate their own money to UNICEF programmes, including Olympic skating sensation Yuna Kim, whose fans also collected funds for UNICEF in celebration of her birthday. In addition, tennis star Novak Djokovic donated $100,000 to support early childhood education in his native Serbia. Djokovic also lent his support by promoting UNICEF Serbia’s card and gift campaign to help raise funds for vulnerable children.

**Key considerations for working with sport celebrities**

- **Finding the right advocate requires investment.** Make sure to choose the right person for the job; athletes should have global recognition before they are appointed as UNICEF Goodwill Ambassadors. Since UNICEF aims to develop long-term relationships with individual athletes, it is important to consider whether the player will be famous after he or she retires. Although retired athletes may no longer be in the media spotlight, they can be effective UNICEF advocates: not only do they have more time to offer, but they are often looking for ways to engage and help give back to society.

- **Celebrities have many demands on their time.** Have realistic expectations of ambassadors’ availability. Competing athletes have very limited time to offer, but may be able to do field visits or meet with authorities after the competition has ended or the season is over. Understanding athletes’ obligations to sponsors and federations will help UNICEF build relationships with athletes and the world of sport – it could also provide opportunities to involve sponsors.

- **Sports Celebrities and Ambassadors increasingly have their own foundations** through which they direct their support for UNICEF, and very often they have other charities and
organisations as well. It is important to work with the celebrities to strengthen the areas of common interest between their foundations and UNICEF.

- **Working with celebrities can involve risks.** Conduct a complete risk assessment on the pluses and minuses of being associated with an athlete. Research the athlete’s affiliations with corporate sponsors to ensure they are not associated with a company or organization whose actions conflict with UNICEF’s principles.

- **HQs can advise on developing celebrity relationships.** All relationships with celebrities should be developed in consultation with the Celebrity Relations and Partnerships section of the Division of Communication in New York or Geneva, and with the Civil Society Partnerships section of the Programme Division. Relationships with established UNICEF Goodwill Ambassadors should similarly be negotiated through the Division of Communication; relationships with national sport celebrities are negotiated through country offices.

- **Work with sport celebrities’ special interests** or draw on their personal experiences. This will give them more credibility and enhance the athletes’ commitment to and engagement with UNICEF’s work.

- **Engage athletes in the initiative** they are supporting with trips to programme areas, which allows them to develop a passion and an experiential understanding of the issues. Supplement these experiences by providing information that explains how programmes work. Communicate messages in straightforward terms, devoid of technical language or “development jargon.”

- **Provide clear communication messages.** An athlete who has a few clear points that are well understood will do a better job of conveying clear messages than someone who has been given a lot of complex information and technical jargon.

### 4.3 Fundraising through Sport

Sport is a vast global business that offers UNICEF considerable potential for fundraising. Spending for sport worldwide topped US$121 billion in 2010, and is predicted to rise to US$145 billion by 2015. Growth from 2011 to 2015 is predicted across all territories.

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There are hundreds of thousands of very resilient kids in Haiti who are surviving despite all they’ve been through. They can endure a lot. Parents dying. Living in tents in 100-degree weather and rainstorms. Hungry bellies. But we don’t want a nation of kids just barely surviving – we want a nation of leaders.

*Sam Dalembert, Haitian-American NBA star*
The sport sponsorship market is becoming an increasingly demanding environment, where sponsors require a clear return on investment and look for value, differentiation, results and credibility among the sport institutions they support.

UNICEF is ideally positioned to take advantage of this landscape. Recent research shows that fans approve of teams engaging in corporate social responsibility, and that doing so has a strong positive impact on an organization’s reputation. An association with UNICEF can therefore help a club connect with its fans and increase its standing.

UNICEF’s experience fundraising through sport

UNICEF has used numerous channels to raise funds through sport, among them:

- **Text message/SMS Donations.** During the 2010 FIFA World Cup, UNICEF Italy teamed up with Save the Children and the African Medical and Research Foundation to promote a text-message donation system, which benefitted the three organizations as well as projects in Africa. During ATP tennis tournaments in South America, Chile partnered with Movistar, one of the largest mobile companies in the region, to encourage cell phone clients to make donations to UNICEF Chile.

- **Racing for a cause:** Some established races – such as marathons or long-distance cycling competitions – are structured in such a way as to allow participants to seek sponsors to contribute to a cause of their choice. This represents another

Tennis World Champion Serena Williams smiles amid a crowd of children and adults at an immunization site in Ghana during the national integrated child health campaign. Ms. Williams met with children and mothers, observed measles vaccinations, helped administer polio drops and vitamin A supplements, and distributed insecticide-treated bed nets. ©UNICEF/NYHQ2006-0799/AKINDELE HICKLING
opportunity for UNICEF to raise funds as a beneficiary.

- **Use of sport events as fundraisers.** One example of this is Soccer Aid, a bi-annual British charity event that raises money for UNICEF UK. In 2010 Soccer Aid raised £2.5 million in aid for UNICEF, and in 2012 the event raised £4.9 million.

- **Partnering with foundations headed by sports figures.** The US Fund for UNICEF has relationships with a range of foundations headed by sport celebrities, including the Samuel Dalembert Foundation, founded by Haitian-born NBA player Sam Dalembert. These associations range from unilateral funding relationships to multi-faceted ones that leverage other fundraising opportunities. (See box below)

- **Partnering with leagues.** The U.S. Fund for UNICEF works with the National Basketball Association’s social responsibility initiative, NBA Cares, on both rapid-response fundraising efforts, such as those following the earthquake in Haiti, as well as longer-term fundraising and advocacy initiatives. The success of this partnership is based on shared organizational priorities, regular and efficient communication, transparency and an understanding of each others’ objectives. The Major League Baseball Association also pledged $1 million to UNICEF in support of relief efforts to Haiti immediately following the 2010 earthquake.

- **Partnering with sports clubs.** UNICEF maintains numerous and varied partnerships with sport clubs that have made substantial contributions to UNICEF’s work, among them:
  - The Flamengo Sports Club, one of Brazil’s biggest soccer teams, has a global fan base of over 35 million people. In 2011 Flamengo asked for UNICEF’s support to form a partnership that protects and promotes the rights of each child and adolescent through safe and inclusive sports. In addition to featuring the UNICEF logo on the club’s shirts, Flamengo hopes to serve as a model for the community and other clubs through the manifestation of its ‘My Team is Top 10’ initiative, a set of ten principles relating to the protection and promotion of the rights of children and adolescents.
  - In 2012, UNICEF Executive Director, Anthony Lake, joined members of FC Barcelona in celebration of the innovative partnership between UNICEF and FC Barcelona, which began in 2006. At the launch of the partnership UNICEF’s logo was placed on FCB’s jersey, the first placement of its kind in the football club’s history. FC Barcelona has donated $1.5 million per year to support
UNICEF’s work during this alliance, which has benefited more than 400,000 children, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

» In 1999, Manchester United became the first British football club to partner with UNICEF, helping to provide 1 million children in India with access to primary education, and actively backing UNICEF’s End Child Exploitation campaign against trafficking. The partnership, United for UNICEF, is the longest-running of its kind and has raised over $2.5 million, helping more than 2.2 million children across the globe.

» UNICEF Croatia formed a partnership with the Croatian Hockey Club Medveščak to sell club game tickets and memorabilia at the UNICEF shop. All ticket sales and a portion of memorabilia receipts go to UNICEF, and UNICEF collectibles and information are available during Medveščak games.

Key considerations for fundraising through sport

Support UNICEF’s brand. Building a strong brand is an integral part of successful fundraising. UNICEF looks for alliances that are compatible with the UNICEF brand. Sports organizations and initiatives that display responsibility and leadership in the community, make a positive contribution to society, have a positive public image, have a history of commitment to development-related causes, have responsible labour practices, and employ responsible environmental practices are usually seen as partners that could contribute to UNICEF’s brand building and fundraising efforts.

- Capitalize on UNICEF’s brand. Sport has the potential to both bring people together and to reach out to diverse audiences globally. Similarly, the UNICEF brand is highly regarded by sport-related organizations, which may seek to underscore their affiliation with UNICEF by featuring the UNICEF logo, such as FC Barcelona did in 2006, and the Flamengo Sports Club did in 2011.

- Facilitate opportunities for raising money. UNICEF can use sport events to raise money by leveraging on the media opportunities these events attract. Fundraising activities may include: creating SMS/text message donation campaigns, using sport events as fundraisers, and soliciting donations from players, leagues and commercial sports organizations.

THE NBA AND UNICEF PARTNERSHIP

The partnership between the US Fund for UNICEF and high-profile basketball player Sam Dalembert demonstrates how a relationship with an individual can help leverage further fundraising and marketing possibilities with teams and leagues.

The long-standing partnership between the US Fund for UNICEF and the Samuel Dalembert Foundation is built upon Mr. Dalembert’s regional interest in and commitment to his home country, Haiti. Mr. Dalembert uses his stature to further UNICEF advocacy and visibility; the Samuel Dalembert Foundation has also made several gifts and pledges to programmes in Haiti.

The National Basketball Association, for which Mr. Dalembert plays, places a strong priority on social responsibility initiatives. Mr. Dalembert is therefore well positioned to champion UNICEF not just externally with fans, but internally within the NBA. For example, following the earthquake in Haiti, Mr. Dalembert’s former team, the Philadelphia 76ers, prominently featured the US Fund for UNICEF in its in-stadium media, and mobilized fans to contribute to relief efforts. The amount donated by fans was matched by Mr. Dalembert, and supplemented with additional contributions by the arena owner, local charities and businesses.
Girls play a game in a UNICEF-supported child-protection centre in Pakistan’s Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province, which gives children an opportunity to play and learn. A psychologist visits the centre to speak with children traumatized by flooding. ©UNICEF/NYHQ2010-2473/SHEHZAD NOORANI
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING S4D INITIATIVES
A well-designed S4D initiative can support UNICEF’s priority focus areas and help the organization contribute to progress with equity towards the Millennium Development Goals. While the use of sport in programming has only gained full recognition in recent years, there is a wealth of experience and knowledge in this area that can guide future programmes.

Some fundamental considerations for designing S4D initiatives include:

- Conduct a careful examination of the current political, social and environmental context.
- Identify risks and plan how to mitigate them.
- Evaluate the pros and cons of potential sport partnerships.
- Design the initiative so that it contributes to an MTSP focus area (see section 2).
- Ensure the initiative is equitable and uses a rights-based approach.
- Ensure the sport and play experience is high-quality. A quality sports activity is fun, challenging, organized, regular and inclusive, and protects the rights of the child.
- Monitor and evaluate programmes.

The most successful programmes are those which capitalize on existing resources and structures, increase local capacity, promote inclusion, and are supported by national policies regarding sport and play. Building on the priorities, systems and capacity that already exist usually results in an initiative that is more sustainable and accepted by the community than one that is implemented by an external organization.

**STANDARDS FOR SPORTS INITIATIVES**

The following guidelines were adapted from the Code of Conduct for Sport and Development Organizations, developed by the Danish NGO Network for Sport and Development.91

**The intrinsic value of sport:** The quality and intrinsic value of sport are upheld in all activities. Efforts are made to ensure that coaches have a high level of training and motivation, that volunteers are valued and kept engaged in the initiative, and that knowledge is shared to develop and protect the sport activity.

**Sports for all:** Activities are designed to maximize access to and participation in appropriate forms of sports, physical activities, play, recreation, organized or competitive sports, and indigenous sports and games. Emphasis is placed on participation and the inclusion of all children, regardless of gender, age, religion, ethnicity, race or ability. Barriers to participation are identified and addressed.

**Sportsmanship:** Sportsmanship means upholding the basic and common values that form an integral part of the sports activities and reinforce the positive values of sport. Players respect the rules and each other, and refrain from violence and the use of doping.

**Physical and mental abuse:** All forms of physical, emotional or sexual abuse are prohibited. Children are never placed in high-risk situations and are free to report any kind of abuse without fear of repercussions.

**Health and injuries:** Activities are conducted with a high level of health awareness and injuries are actively prevented.

**Safety:** The organizations are aware of all safety issues, and elaborate, communicate and implement a safety policy to protect all employees, participants and athletes. Sport activities take place in an accessible, clean and hazard-free environment. The organizations are especially aware of the safety of girls.

**Public awareness raising and fundraising:** The organizations use their project and participants in an ethical and concerned way when raising public awareness through communication campaigns and when fundraising.
5.1 Understand the Context

In determining when and how S4D initiatives can be used to help achieve UNICEF objectives, it is imperative to begin with an analysis of the current situation in terms of the social, political and environmental contexts. The most successful programmes are those which capitalize on existing resources and structures, increase local capacity, promote inclusion, and are supported by national policies regarding sport and play. Building on the priorities, systems and capacity that already exist usually results in an initiative that is more sustainable and accepted by the community than one that is implemented by an external organization.

It is therefore very important to base any analysis on a thorough understanding of:

- **Key actors.** Which organizations and individuals from civil society and the government are already providing services for children and adolescents, and could facilitate sport and play activities?

- **Existing programmes.** What are the objectives, results to date and future plans of existing sport initiatives?

- **Where, when and how do children access and participate in sport?** To what extent are existing programmes inclusive of disadvantaged children, including girls, out-of-school children and children with disabilities?

- **National policies and frameworks.** To what extent are sport and play outlined in government policies and agendas as a child’s right and as a tool for development?

- **Which organization or government entity is responsible for sport in the country?** For example: government ministries, youth organizations, NGOs, National Olympic Committee.

- **History of S4D in the country.** What has been the development of S4D, and what have been the successes and shortcomings of previous sport initiatives?

- **Cultural context of sport.** What are potential barriers to participation in sport and play (for example, gender and social norms, beliefs and attitudes towards play, lack of safe spaces and materials)? Which strategies have worked well to deal with these barriers in the past?
5.2 Assess Potential Risks

UNICEF’s work with sport is driven by the idea that children not only have a right to play, but also a right to play free from violence, exploitation and coercion. While the benefits of sport and play for children are widely recognized, the negative aspects of sport cannot be discounted. Some examples of potential risks include: the physical safety of participants, gender stereotyping, reinforcing disability stereotyping, and physical or sexual violence between coach and athlete.

Furthermore, when seeking partnerships, UNICEF must also consider the potential reputational risks of the association. The world of sport is not immune to or unfamiliar with scandals or issues of corporate social responsibility. Engaging in sport partnerships brings with it the potential for reputational risks to UNICEF, including the possibility of association with sports figures who are poor or unreliable role models, litigation against implementing partners, and practices of partners that clash with UNICEF’s values, such as the use of child labour in the sporting goods industry or other practices that raise ethical concerns.

Given its child rights mandate and leadership in S4D, UNICEF is well placed to play an important global role in helping to identify and respond to concerns about child rights violations relating to sport. UNICEF can advise partners – both governments and sport organizations – on the standards to be met and work with them to eliminate harmful practices in the world of sport.

Risks to the child

Participation in sport can present physical and emotional risks to children; these need to be assessed and managed in the design and implementation of a Sport for Development programme. Some of the risks and limitations from which children need protection are outlined below.
Children are in situations during training, sport events or trips away from home where they lack adequate adult supervision and are vulnerable to abuse. This can include bullying, hazing and physical injury.

There is potential for abuse of power in a relationship between coach and player, including intimidation and ridiculing of a child, or requiring sex for transactional purposes, such as placement on a team.

The location of sports venues and times of games and training may mean that children are unsafe when they travel to and from programmes. Girls may be particularly vulnerable.

Sports federations prioritize the advancement of their sport over designing programmes that meet specific development objectives. This may mean that sport initiatives are not inclusive, equitable and/or driven by rights-based principles.

Sport programmes may reinforce gender and ability stereotyping unless the activity, rules and environment are specifically designed to accommodate and include all children, regardless of gender and ability.

The rigorous physical and time demands of elite sport training may threaten a child’s health and right to an education.

There is a risk of unfair exploitation of child athletes from developing countries for commercial gain.

Commercial sports may not be conducive to social development if their only objective is commercial gain.

5.3 Identify Common Objectives, Opportunities and Risks

It is well recognized that UNICEF and sport organizations have different priorities. While UNICEF is primarily interested in using sport to achieve development outcomes, sport organizations typically prioritize the development of the sport or athletes as outcomes. However, there are occasions where the partners’ priorities overlap. For this reason, it is important for the partners to agree on at least one shared objective that the partnership will aim to achieve.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Promote a child-centred development agenda among more organizations.
- Promote a rights-based approach in more initiatives.
- Create and share knowledge and generate learning opportunities.
- Expand or enhance country-level delivery systems, especially in rural areas.
- Maximize impact without using resources unnecessarily.
- Harmonize policies among development partners.
- Attract new donors to boost fundraising.
- Improve brand visibility of UNICEF

**POTENTIAL RISKS**

- Partners are unable to establish a culture of trust or collaboration due to competing agendas or lack of clear shared objectives.
- Partner’s organizational priorities result in the focus shifting to incompatible areas, such as supporting elite athletes or facilitating programmes that exclude girls.
- Partners are interested in simply securing funds or using the UNICEF brand rather than engaging in a more strategic partnership or collaborative relationship.
- Management and accounting practices do not meet UNICEF’s standards.
- Partners have existing relationships with other entities, for example sponsors, who have practices that do not align with UNICEF’s values.
A partnership that uses sport as a tool to achieve development objectives needs to consider both the opportunities and risks associated with entering into a partnership. Strategies for capitalizing on the opportunities and minimizing the risks should be examined during the partnership development process.

The table on the previous page highlights operational opportunities and risks of sport partnerships.

5.4 **Determine which Type of Partnership and Agreement Would Work Best**

Partnerships can range from relatively informal relationships to more formal agreements that involve transfers of resources. A partnership may be a short-term engagement to work on a specific event, such as the World Cup, or a medium- to long-term relationship that is often based on a commitment to shared objectives.

Many relationships with partner organizations will change over time and in reaction to a specific situation. For example, a partnership that may have been initiated for the purpose of a specific event may continue after that event, but have different objectives. In order for this to happen effectively, partner organizations need to invest in the development of the partnership itself.

Documentation needs to be created to reflect the dialogue and agreements that have taken place between the partners. The type of documentation will reflect the type of partnership. The capacity for monitoring, reviewing and adapting the partnership needs to be included in all agreement types. The parties need to decide whether the type of partnership will need a:

- Memorandum of Understanding
- Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA)
- Small-scale funding support agreement
- No formal agreement
- Agreement format presented by the partner organizations

**NOTE:** Many sports-related organizations, including sports federations, do not comply with all of the accountability measures in the PCA guidelines at the beginning of the partnership. A number of options are available to address this, such as: making direct payments to vendors; seconding staff to work on the programme; considering a small-scale funding support agreement; or agreeing to a trial partnership by identifying small-scale activities that can be jointly undertaken, or agreeing to a shorter time frame.
Additional considerations

- **Involve new and diverse actors.** Sport provides an opportunity to form partnerships among a range of actors who would not usually work together and, in some cases, would not usually work with UNICEF.

- **Acknowledge differences as well as commonalities.** Different partners work in different ways. The differences between partners’ values, operating mechanisms and core businesses need to be recognized and accommodated in the partnership agreement. In many cases, it may be the first time some ministries have worked together to implement programmes. Partners should also reach an agreement about how the programme will be represented and publicly profiled at the outset of the initiative.

- **Support internal collaboration.** Sport is a tool that is relevant across thematic areas. It is therefore important that attention is given to collaboration and partnerships within UNICEF as well as with other organizations.

5.5 **Ensure Effective Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms**

One of the most significant challenges facing sport- and play-based programmes is the need for strong and reliable data to demonstrate the impact of S4D-based activities and inform programming and principles of good practice. This gap is due in part to the burgeoning growth of S4D over a relatively short period of time, as well as the difficulty in consolidating a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework across such a wide range of sport-related interventions. Where sport has been mainstreamed across a number of broader interventions for children, for example, S4D is often rarely evaluated as an independent function, and tends to be omitted from country reports. Given the critical role that solid evidence plays in informing programming and principles of good practice, it is clear that a more systematic approach to M&E is needed.93

Given its reliance on data and evidence to guide advocacy and programming, the Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES) approach can strengthen
M&E and achieve results for the most disadvantaged children. Toward this end, the MoRES Toolkit, launched in early 2013, can help guide country offices to gather reliable data to demonstrate the impact of S4D initiatives. A resource for programme, planning, M&E, and other interested staff, the toolkit is designed to support integration of the MoRES approach across programmes, providing options, guidance and suggestions.

**Opportunities to enhance M&E systems**

There are a number of different scenarios in which M&E of sport and play should be conducted or supported:

- **Helping to develop clearly-defined objectives for sport and play**: Many sport and play activities lack clearly-defined outcomes that relate to programmatic goals for children. Without clearly-defined and mapped outcomes, it is difficult to ascertain how sport and play programmes can be sustained, scaled-up and targeted to reach development and peace-related priorities.

- **Developing or improving M&E capacity among sport-based organizations and implementing partners**: Sport for Development organizations may have their own M&E systems. In these cases, UNICEF staff can help partner organizations focus their evaluation activities on measuring outcomes from a rights-based perspective.

- **Analysing the partnership process**: In order to refine partnership building, time and resources should be dedicated to analysing the processes and outcomes of the partnership. For example, UNICEF South Africa examined the partnerships built for World Cup 2010 to determine the lessons learned that could be applied to future sport events.
“Reviewing project objectives is often neglected in the development of the operational framework for programme monitoring. Incoherence and lack of clarity at this stage almost certainly leads to difficulties in the implementation of the system. The temptation to leap into the intervention without revisiting either the problem or the expected outcomes is not uncommon.” Sue Laver, Senior Advisor (M&E), UNICEF Zimbabwe

Context: In 2008, UNICEF Zimbabwe agreed to support the development of a national community sport club, YES (Youth Education Through Sport), which focuses on promoting healthy behaviours and life skills among youth. A sustainable system was needed to monitor and evaluate the intervention at three levels: the individual level, i.e. behaviour change among youth; the community level, where structures for the delivery of the programme would be developed and formalized; and the policy level, where national decisions about sport development are made.

What Worked

Identifying potential challenges at the onset and planning accordingly. At the start of the initiative, it was noted that measurement was perceived as a “peripheral” activity and not as an integral aspect of programming. Time was therefore taken to ask the questions: Why do we need M&E and what do we understand by M&E in the context of a sports programme? How can M&E generate the evidence we need to demonstrate if our programme has worked or not?

Revisiting and revising the expected intervention outcomes so that changes at every level of the intervention can be measured over time. Questions were asked such as: As a result of our programme, what changes can we expect among our target groups? At the individual level, at the community level, and at the policy level?

Taking time to examine stated programme objectives and reframing them so that they are specific and measurable. For example, when reviewing the objective “Empower girls through sport,” staff asked probing questions such as: What does ‘empower’ mean and how will we know when that has happened? How can we measure ‘empowerment’?

Developing a staged process for strengthening the M&E system. The team established the following steps, with capacity-building activities and documentation to support each step:

1) Formation of a Technical Working Group to oversee the development of the system.
2) Review of project objectives and definition of M&E questions.
3) Development of the system mechanics, including a simple data collection system that included a map of data flow, data collection tools, and an electronic data entry tool (e.g. in Access or Excel).
4) Development of key technical support documentation, including reporting guidelines and an Indicator Guide.
5) Assessment of M&E capacity and definition of activities to address the gaps accordingly.
6) Identifying possible constraints to data collection and making the data entry system and data collection tools as simple as possible.

One of the most significant challenges facing sport- and play-based programmes is the need for strong and reliable data to demonstrate the impact of S4D-based activities and inform programming and principles of good practice.
Implications of a rights-based approach to measuring outcomes

In many contexts, sport and play are integrated into programmes as tools to achieve outcomes in a specific focus area, such as the use of sport to promote HIV and AIDS prevention, or to improve education outcomes. Measuring the extent to which sport and play have contributed to a particular development priority requires the same evaluation design that would be used when determining the outcomes of any intervention or tool.

A rights-based approach to evaluation has implications with regard to which particular aspects of sport- and play-based programmes and initiatives should be examined. The focus of M&E should be to assess whether the programme’s implementation process and outcomes – as seen from the individual and community standpoint – adhere to rights-based guidelines.

Recommended topics to evaluate

Monitoring and evaluation activities among sport organizations often focus on the number of children attending a sport event, festival or sport- and play-based programme. Yet little data are available on the quality and level of children’s participation in sport and play, on which children were included or excluded, and on how children’s participation might be linked to particular child development and education outcomes.

To assess these areas, the following groups of sample questions, targeting implementation and outcome, can be useful:

In Zambia, where UNICEF is working with sports organizations, girls play football at Muwangani School in Luapula Province. Sports help bolster self-esteem, teach interpersonal skills and challenge gender stereotypes. ©UNICEF/NYHQ2004-0847/FRANCOIS D’ELBEE
Regarding implementation

- **Gender equality**: How are gender inequalities addressed in sport activities (including language that is used, division of responsibilities and leadership opportunities)? Are sport and play programmes provided in an equitable, non-discriminatory manner? Are sport programmes helping to improve inter-personal relationships between girls and boys?

- **Child and adolescent participation**: Are children participating in making decisions about how and what sport and play activities are implemented? If not, why not?

- **Inclusion**: Do all children have equal opportunities (e.g. playing time, travel opportunities, access to events, leadership training, etc.)? What barriers have been addressed and innovations developed to increase participation in physical activities among girls, children with disabilities and other marginalized groups?

- **Safety**: What steps have been taken to ensure children’s physical and emotional safety when participating in physical activities?

- **Outcome of coach/leader training**: Many sport- and play-based initiatives involve training community members, teachers and youth as peer role models who are engaged in different levels of planning, implementation and decision-making. In this context, traditional sport and play programmes typically regard trained teachers, leaders or coaches as inputs, yet the development of teachers, coaches or peer leaders should be regarded as an important outcome in the development process.

Regarding outcome of participation in sport and play programmes

- **Inclusion**: Assess to what extent community attitudes and behaviour have changed towards girls’ participation in sport, or towards the participation of children with disabilities. To what extent have sport and play programmes improved leadership among girls, children with disabilities and other marginalized groups?

- **Children’s rights**: Assess to what extent the programme has impacted: children’s ability to articulate their rights and advocate for them; community advocacy for the right to play and recreation; the degree to which realization of the right to play has influenced the realization of other rights. For example, what evidence is there that the introduction of sport activities and play-based...
learning into formal schooling has influenced the right to education?

» **Education**: Assess the extent to which integration of sport and play in schools has influenced attendance rates and improved the quality of education.

» **Resiliency**: Assess child and adolescent resilience, particularly before and after their participation in sport and play activities, in order to identify any psychosocial changes that may have occurred.

» **Behaviour change**: Assess how taking part in sport programmes influences other areas of children’s lives by identifying changes in behaviour during the time the child is participating in the sport and play activity. It is important to note that while some behaviours are observable (e.g. hand-washing), other behaviours are not (sexual activity). It is, however, possible to measure changes in knowledge, attitudes and skills that are needed to adopt new behaviours.

» **Reducing inequity**: Assess how programmes involving the most disadvantaged help to reduce inequity.

» **Quality of life**: Assess how sport improves quality of life or achievements in selected quality of life domains, e.g., educational achievement or health.

» **Capacity of coaches/leaders**: Assess changes in coach and child interactions and children’s perception of the coach/leader as a role model and mentor.

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**SAMPLE INDICATORS TO REFLECT CHANGE AMONG CHILDREN, LEADERS, COMMUNITY GROUPS AND PARTNERS**

Examples of some indicators that may be developed to reflect change include:

- Percentage of children involved in sport and play projects who report a greater sense of self-confidence, self-worth and competency (disaggregate by age and gender).

- Percentage of girls, children with disabilities and other target marginalized groups who participate in sport and play activities.

- Percentage of coaches/leaders demonstrating an increased capacity for using sport and play to promote life skills.

- Percentage of coaches/leaders reporting improved knowledge and percentage reporting improved skills for encouraging children’s participation in sport and play.

- Percentage of teachers who are able to conduct play-based learning in the basic education system.

- Percentage of teachers who are able to conduct physical education activities in the basic education system.

- Number of partners who incorporate sport and play activities into existing timetables.

- Number of partners who incorporate sport and play activities into existing resource allocation.

- Percentage of schools that allocate time in timetables for structured sport and play activities.

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**Internally displaced children play amidst the dust in Jalozai camp, Pakistan’s Nowshera district.**

Over two million people were displaced by fighting in Pakistan’s North West Frontier Province, more than half of whom were children in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. UNICEF provided water and sanitation services, supported primary education, health and nutrition in camps, as well as monitoring unaccompanied and orphaned children and households headed by women.

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This document focuses on physical activities as a form of recreation and structured play.


27. Ibid, pp. 39-40

28. Ibid, pp. 42


31. Ibid, pp. 5-8


41. Ibid


48. Ibid


51. Ibid, 12


57. Ibid.


65. For guidelines, go to: http://www.selounicef.org.br/?op=4


68. http://womenwin.org/


70. Ibid, 15


73. http://pykka.gov.in/


80. Ibid (previous two citations)
81. Information about programmes that are structured to be inclusive is available from the International Platform on Sport and Development at www.sportanddev.org.
85. FIFA, “Fifa.com attracts over a quarter of a billion visits as the world engages online with the 2010 Fifa World Cup”, July 2010, Retrieved on 12 April 2013 from http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/archive/southafrica2010/organisation/media/ newsid=1273696/index.html
In Afghanistan, girls and boys play basketball together at Aschiana, a local UNICEF-supported NGO that serves children who live or work on the streets, offering educational and vocational training as well as health and hygiene courses. © UNICEF/NYHQ2007-1205/SHAHZAD NOORANI