

Sport Builds Bridges

Reintegrating street children through sport

The programme, developed in Switzerland, aims at reintegrating street children into their families and public schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



Location	Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)
Organisation	Sport–The Bridge
Start-end date	2002–ongoing
Target group age	5–15 years old
Reach	200 children
Partners	Local organisations
For inspiration	www.sportthebridge.ch



Summary

Sport–The Bridge is a voluntary organisation founded in Switzerland that has the goal of promoting children’s personal development and building bridges between people. In doing so it relies on the universal value of sport. The Ethiopia-Sport Builds Bridges project offers street children from Addis Ababa a possibility to find a way back to their families and society. In the first year of the programme they attend daily sports educational lessons, tournaments and games. During training sessions of football, basketball, martial arts and other types of sports, the children learn acceptance, fairness and teamwork, as well as how to follow the rules. Additionally, the children have the opportunity to playfully practise how to deal with their emotions, both positive and negative. Children also learn to relate to and implement the behaviour they learn during sports into their daily lives. After the first few weeks, the programme begins to work with the families. Together with the staff, family members and the children discuss existing problems and look for solutions. The successful clarification of the family situation is key to the sustainable integration of the children in their families.

“The strong curriculum focus on ‘pedagogy’ and the emphasis given to the importance of family involvement around their street children are what make this project remarkable and very contemporary.”

Sport–The Bridge
programme organiser

Keys to success

Help for self-help

The programme is based on the principle of “help for self-help” and can be divided into two phases: one year of intensive support, at the end of which the child should be ready to sleep at home and attend public school; and three further years of supervision of the child and their family.

Voluntary-based work

100% of the work in Switzerland is done by volunteers; therefore all contributions go directly to the project in Ethiopia.





Sport for All objectives

Improve public health and well-being

The project has five departments, which are nutrition, health, family integration, sport and administration/infrastructure. Important components of the programme include personal body hygiene, health care, and the treatment of illnesses. Only a child who does not have to worry about finding food every day on the street and only a child with a healthy body can concentrate on the didactic topics in sport. In providing medical care, food support and teaching of various topics the programme ensures a healthy development of body and mind. In workshops and self-help groups the families learn how to handle their children, to take responsibility and also to improve their economic situation.

Provide equal access to sport

The goal of the programme is to offer street children a possibility to find a way back to their families and society through the universal medium of sport. The combination of access to sport with access to learning opportunities stands at the heart of the activities. Children and families, but also society, have to learn to change their behaviour, and sport is an ideal tool for promoting such learning. However access to sport is not always forthcoming for these communities. At the centre of the programme's activities are the sport-pedagogical teaching of the children about social behaviour through sport, their reintegration into their families and their reintegration into school.

How is the programme communicated?

Communication is mainly through the involvement of the local community and by word-of-mouth through spreading the message in schools and institutions. This involvement offers opportunities to support and strengthen community cohesion and development and bring children to the programme with the support of their family.

How is the programme evaluated?

Following the programme there is close contact with the children and their families through a follow-up programme in which support is reduced step-by-step to gradually promoting independence. Constant feedback and support is provided.



Join the sporting society!

Globally, 1 in 4 adults is not active enough and more than 80% of the world's adolescent population is insufficiently physically active (World Health Organization). Let's reverse the trend and get moving.



Promote sport and physical activity

Recent changes in leisure and work practices, diet and a host of other trends has led to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle amongst the world's population. Sport for all programmes aim to promote sport and physical activity to mitigate the negative effects associated with these developments.



Improve public health and well-being

Sport and physical activity plays an important role in making societies healthier, happier and safer into the future. Successful sport for all projects help to stimulate these common benefits across entire communities.



Support active societies

Active societies involve many stakeholders such as parents, coaches, schools, local clubs, sports organisations, event organisers and grassroots activities, to name but a few. They can all be hugely influential in promoting healthier lifestyles within a community. Programmes that support and reinforce their efforts are vital for the encouragement and promotion of active societies around the world.



Provide equal access to sport

Every member within a community should have equal opportunity to live an active and healthy lifestyle. Effective grassroots programmes place a heavy emphasis on ensuring that all of their participants can enjoy this opportunity regardless of physical condition, race, gender, social conditions, geographical location or otherwise.



Foster Olympic legacy

The Olympic Games provide a source of inspiration and a vibrant expression of the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. This unique power can energise communities to develop projects enabling and inspiring people to become and stay physically active into the future.

Become a key player in your community

A useful platform has been designed for organisations across the Olympic Movement that are managing Sport for All programmes, providing them with the knowledge, understanding and tools needed to improve existing programmes worldwide, as well as to create new ones.

Get inspired by more than 45 projects around the world

Learn more about best practices with our toolkit

Create your project based on proven academic research and experience of organisations

Share your experience and lead the way to inspire more projects

Connect with a vast network fueled by inspired partners

Find more information

- Sports and Active Society Programmes
- A Guide to Implementation
- www.olympic.org
- activesociety@olympic.org