OLYMPIC SOLIDARITY AND NOC SERVICES
ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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SUPPORTING NOCS AND THEIR ATHLETES EVERY STEP OF THE WAY TO PARIS 2024 AND BEYOND

2024 was truly an Olympic year – a momentous time when years of dedication and preparation culminated in unforgettable experiences. It was a year when dreams were realised or challenged, and new stars emerged on the world stage. Once again, the Olympic Games powerfully showcased the spirit that unites us all: humanity coming together in celebration of sport and shared values.

The National Olympic Committees (NOCs) were indispensable in readying their delegations for this groundbreaking occasion – from long months of preparation to the intense weeks of competition. For the International Olympic Committee (IOC) teams who work with NOCs, it was also a pivotal period. After years of collaboration and meticulous planning alongside the Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG), the NOC Relations team witnessed the tangible results of their efforts firsthand, including the successful participation of athletes from the territories of all 206 NOCs. The Governance Services team ensured that all NOCs strictly adhered to the principles of the Olympic Charter and were in good standing to be able to carry out their mission and operate properly. Meanwhile, Olympic Solidarity saw its mission fulfilled through programmes supporting elite athletes in their preparation for and participation in the Games.

While the Olympic Games shine as the pinnacle of athletic achievement, they represent only the tip of the iceberg – or, if you prefer, the summit of a pyramid. Beneath that visible peak lies a strong and essential foundation: grassroots sport, community engagement and youth athlete development. This report highlights the vital work that the NOC Relations, Olympic Solidarity and Olympism365 teams undertake to ensure this foundation remains solid and continues to grow stronger year after year, and that sport contributes to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

2024 was also a landmark year for the next generation of winter sports athletes. The Winter Youth Olympic Games Gangwon 2024 brought together young hopefuls for 12 days of outstanding competition and enriching youth activities.

Looking ahead, challenges will undoubtedly arise. Yet NOCs can approach the future with optimism. The approved budget for the Olympic Solidarity 2025–2028 plan has reached a record USD 650 million, an overall increase of 10 per cent from the previous cycle, with the majority of the additional funds earmarked for continued support for athletes. This strengthened investment, combined with the ongoing and never-ending efforts to promote good governance, highlights a firm commitment to enhancing support for NOCs and their athletes in the years to come.

The extraordinary work and dedication demonstrated by NOCs and all the partners over the past few years deserves special recognition. The shared journey, fostering the Olympic values and empowering athletes worldwide, continues.

Happy reading!

"Every talented athlete should have the opportunity to pursue their Olympic dreams. Olympic Solidarity exists to help make that possible. In Paris 2024, athletes from 91 NOCs and the IOC Olympic Refugee Team won medals. A shining example of how the Olympic Movement continues to build a fairer and more inclusive sporting environment, made possible through our unwavering commitment to reinvesting in sport and the athletes."

Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee

"With constant support from and close collaboration with the Continental Associations and the NOCs, Olympic Solidarity delivered targeted support programmes that enabled athletes from all regions of the world to train, qualify, and compete at Paris. This collective achievement stands as a testament to the Olympic values of solidarity, universality, and the power of sport to unite the world."

Robin Mitchell, Chair of the Olympic Solidarity Commission

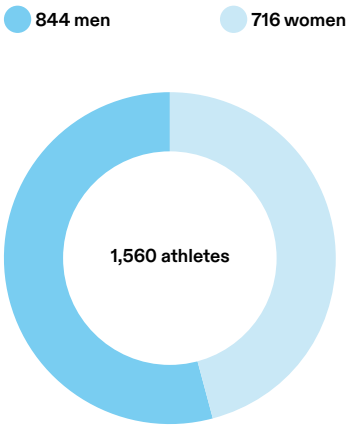
UNIVERSALITY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Olympic Games Paris 2024

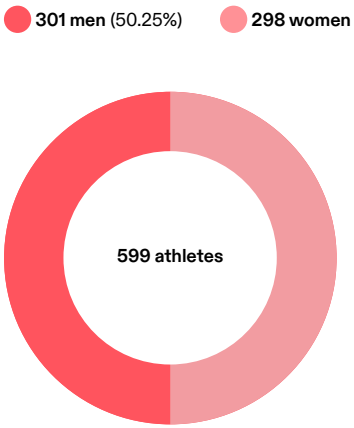
Olympic Scholarships for Athletes

A total of 1,560 Olympic Scholarships for Athletes for Paris 2024 were awarded to athletes from 195 NOCs. Of these 195 NOCs, 36 benefitted from the tailor-made option, specific to NOCs with large delegations exceeding 50 athletes at the previous Games of the Olympiad. Of these 1,560 athletes, 599 from 172 NOCs participated in the Paris Games, in 24 sports.

OLYMPIC SCHOLARSHIP-HOLDERS FOR PARIS 2024 BY GENDER



OLYMPIC SCHOLARSHIP-HOLDERS FOR PARIS 2024 PARTICIPATING IN THE GAMES BY GENDER

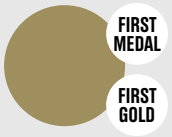


NUMBER OF MEDALS AND DIPLOMAS WON BY OLYMPIC SCHOLARSHIP-HOLDERS AT PARIS 2024

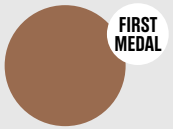
HISTORIC FIRSTS THROUGH OLYMPIC SCHOLARSHIP-HOLDERS AT PARIS 2024

FIRST-EVER FOR THREE NOCS

Letsile Tebogo, Athletics, Men's 200m, Botswana

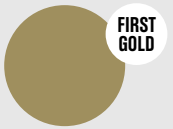


Thea LaFond, Athletics, Women's Triple Jump, Dominica



David De Pina, Boxing, Men's 51 kg, Cape Verde

FIRST-EVER IN AN INDIVIDUAL SPORT



Arshad Nadeem, Athletics, Men's Javelin throw, Pakistan

Arshad Nadeem: Perseverance pays off as Pakistani javelin star strikes Olympic gold

Hard work, new equipment fuel record-breaking throw at Paris 2024

When asked to sum up his accomplishments at the Olympic Games Paris 2024, Pakistani javelin ace Arshad Nadeem puts it simply: “I continue to be mesmerised by what I did.”

And who wouldn’t be? Nadeem crushed all competition at Paris 2024, securing gold with a colossal throw of 92.97m, an Olympic record.

The result was a full 3.52m ahead of runner-up and reigning Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra of India, a rival Nadeem had yet to vanquish in nine previous attempts, and an additional 0.91m better than that of two-time world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada.

Not that Nadeem, an Olympic Scholarship-holder for Paris 2024, paid any mind to the final rankings. “I’m indifferent to what everybody else is doing,” he admitted. “I do not compete against other athletes. My competition is with myself.”

In terms of personal growth, Nadeem’s performance in Paris was a striking improvement on his Olympic debut at Tokyo 2020, where he placed fifth with a throw of 84.62m.

The 27-year-old credits his steady progress, which included a gold medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games and a silver medal at the 2023 World Athletics Championships, to the lessons learnt at his first Games and the relentless training that followed.

“Tokyo 2020 was my first Olympics, and it was an introduction to what an Olympic competition was, so I had some shortcomings,” he said. “What the world saw [at Paris 2024] was a result of what I had gained at the previous Olympics, what I took note of, and how I worked on these points during my training.”

Nadeem was also able to put his Olympic Solidarity scholarship funding to good use ahead of Paris. It included better training opportunities overseas and the purchase of some much-needed equipment.

“The Olympic Solidarity scholarship was very beneficial,” Nadeem said. “It aided especially in my training, as I used part of it to go to South Africa for training.”

“I also bought some equipment,” he added, before pausing to display his new purchases. “Look! Good graphite javelins that I did not have previously.”

As the story goes, Nadeem had been using the same javelin for nearly eight years prior to the upgrade. The episode is a stark reminder of the hurdles faced by some athletes around the world, and also makes Nadeem’s rise from humble beginnings in a rural farming community to all-conquering athletics champion all the more impressive.

In Pakistan, a country obsessed with team sports such as cricket and hockey, Nadeem is an anomaly on the sporting landscape. His Olympic victory was the nation's first ever in an individual sport, and the first Olympic gold for Pakistan in any sport in 40 years.

His unexpected individual triumph at Paris 2024 made Nadeem an overnight sensation back home, where thousands came out to greet him upon his return from the Games. The adulation was enough to test the patience of even the most seasoned celebrity athlete, but, true to form, Nadeem has remained even-keeled throughout it all.

“I was really honoured by the love, affection and honours that the people of Pakistan gave me ... but none of it has gone to my head. I’m still the same old Arshad,” the soft-spoken Olympic champion said. “I like to care for people, I like to be with my family.

“But it has given me renewed energy to work harder and improve my performances. You could say my success has fuelled my passion.”

Ominous words indeed for the rest of the javelin world heading into the next Olympiad.

↓ Olympic Scholarship-holder for Paris 2024 Arshad Nadeem (Pakistan) set a new Olympic record in javelin en route to gold.

Midas touch: Track phenom Tebogo transforms Olympic scholarship into gold

From adversity to advocacy, Botswana's first Olympic champion comes full circle

It's fair to say that, having gone from struggling to make ends meet to Olympic gold medallist in just a few short years, Botswana's Letsile Tebogo has made the most of his Olympic Solidarity scholarship.

When Tebogo first began receiving Olympic Solidarity funding in 2022, he was a teenage sprinter with all the talent and ambition to one day become a champion. What he lacked was the wherewithal.

On the track, his star was rising. At 17, he won gold at the 2021 World U20 Championships, setting a U20 world record in the process. A year later, he was crowned African champion, and the same year he defended his U20 World Championship title, became the first Botswanan to break the 10-second barrier (9.96) in the 100m, and lowered his U20 world record even further, this time to 9.91 seconds.

Off the track, however, he was barely getting by. It wasn't until his Olympic Solidarity grant kicked in that his life took a dramatic turn for the better.

"Since receiving it, everything has become easier, because as an athlete it allows you to channel all your focus on training ... not worrying about what you are going to eat, what you are going to pay rent with," Tebogo, now 21, said during a visit to Olympic House in Lausanne in 2024.

His coach, Kebonyemodisa "Dose" Mosimanyane, added: "Letsile was able to eat well, sleep well because he had accommodation and could buy groceries. He could also get to training every day and on time because he didn't struggle much with petrol money or transport."

Importantly, the scholarship also allowed Tebogo to attend any competition in Botswana or internationally that his coach deemed necessary for his progression.

The results quickly followed:

- In 2023: bronze in the 200m and silver in the 100m at the 2023 World Championships in Budapest.
- In 2024: a national record (9.86) in the 100m and gold in the 200m at the Olympic Games Paris 2024 – an African record (19.46) and the first gold medal ever for Botswana.

Tebogo also claimed silver in the 4×400m at Paris 2024 alongside teammates Busang Kebinatshipi and fellow Olympic Scholarship-holders Bayapo Ndori and Anthony Pesela. Team Botswana lost out on gold by one-hundredth of a second to Team USA, Tebogo making it possible with his relentless pursuit of Rai Benjamin over the final leg to set up a sensational finish. Remarkably, the average age of the Botswana relay team was just 22 at Paris 2024, meaning there is likely plenty more in store from the group on the world's biggest stages.

"With a team comprising young talents, it's promising that in the future we still have more chances of dominating in athletics," said Ndori. "The experience gained from Paris 2024 combined with the ongoing development and support lays a strong foundation for the future."

The same can also be said for Botswanan athletes more generally. During the 2021-2024 period, the NOC of Botswana was a recipient of Olympic Solidarity funding as part of the Development of the National Sports Structure programme. With the support, the NOC has set out to strengthen and align long-term athlete and coaching development systems in the country for the sport of athletics. The main aims are to increase the number of athletes and qualified coaches, raise awareness of and cooperation in delivering athletics, and improve the standard of active athletes through increased competition opportunities. The hope is that this can create a sustainable pathway for all these stakeholders.

Not surprisingly, these goals received a tremendous boost thanks to the performances of Tebogo and his teammates at Paris 2024. "It helped a lot to unite the nation," said Oabona Theetso, Athletics Team Manager for Botswana at Paris 2024. "It has inspired many athletes – they now see that it is possible. The number of athletes who register for our track and field series has increased significantly to a point where we are sometimes forced to [cap the number of competitors]."

Tebogo and his teammates are helping put the country on the map in other ways, too. In 2026, Botswana will become the first African nation to host the World Relays, while Tebogo, who was named World Athletics Athlete of the Year for 2024, will also take up the role of World Athletics' global ambassador for Kids' Athletics.

It's a fitting honour, as Tebogo has been vocal in his commitment to helping others, especially those looking to follow in his footsteps.

"I believe in 'blessed is the hand that gives': the more you give out, the more you receive," said Tebogo. "So for me, helping people is one of the things that's on the top of my mind because I want to see the next Letsile, I want to see other athletes benefiting from Olympic Solidarity scholarships."

↓ Olympic Scholarship-holder for Paris 2024 Letsile Tebogo (Botswana) became his nation's first ever gold medallist by winning the 200m in the French capital.

Refugee Athlete Support

The IOC Refugee Olympic Team Paris 2024 represented more than 100 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. Made up of 37 athletes, hosted by 15 NOCs and competing across 12 sports, the team demonstrated to the world that refugees are an enrichment to society. The team was led by the Chef de Mission, Masomah Ali Zada, herself a member of the Refugee Olympic Team Tokyo 2020. In the lead-up to the Olympic Games Paris 2024, 74 Refugee Athlete Scholarship-holders were on a programme managed by the Olympic Refuge Foundation and funded by Olympic Solidarity supporting refugee athletes to train and compete with the aim of being selected to represent the IOC Refugee Olympic Team Paris 2024. The most notable achievement was the first medal ever won by the team, with Cindy Ngamba winning bronze in the women's boxing 75 kg event.

Team Support Grant

The Teams Support Grant progamme allows NOCs to provide technical and financial support for teams to train for and take part in regional, continental and world competitions, with a view to attempting to qualify for the Olympic Games. By the time of the Paris 2024 Games, 209 grants had been awarded to summer sport teams at various development levels. Of these teams, 26 qualified for the 2024 Games. Among the most notable achievements were the gold medals secured by the German women's 3×3 basketball team, the Serbian men's water polo team and the men's handball team from Denmark.

In addition to the Team Support Grants for summer sports, 17 were allocated for winter sports (curling and ice-hockey) in the years prior to 2024, bringing the total of Team Support Grants to 226.

TEAM SUPPORT GRANT RECIPIENTS WITH TOP-8 FINISHES AT PARIS 2024

1	DENMARK HANDBALL ♂	4	BELGIUM BASKETBALL ♀	5	SLOVENIA VOLLEYBALL ♂
1	GERMANY BASKETBALL 3×3 ♀	4	QATAR BEACH VOLLEYBALL ♂	7	BRAZIL BASKETBALL ♂
1	SERBIA WATER POLO ♂	4	SPAIN HOCKEY ♂	7	GREAT BRITAIN RUGBY SEVENS ♀
2	AUSTRALIA WATER POLO ♀	4	TÜRKIYE VOLLEYBALL ♀	7	SPAIN HOCKEY ♀
3	INDIA HOCKEY ♂	5	GREECE WATER POLO ♂	8	AUSTRALIA WATER POLO ♂
		5	LATVIA BEACH VOLLEYBALL ♀	8	NIGERIA BASKETBALL ♀

↓ The Australian women's water polo team put in its best showing at an Olympic Games in 24 years with a silver in Paris.

↓ The Qatari men's beach volleyball team was on top of its game at Paris 2024, placing fourth.

Team players: Belgian Cats provide ultimate alley-oop at Paris 2024

Influence of women's basketball team extends far beyond the court

Generational. Inspirational. Sensational.

The Belgium women's national basketball team was all that and more at the Olympic Games Paris 2024 – despite not even reaching the podium.

The Belgian Cats came agonisingly close to medalling at their second Olympic appearance, finishing fourth following a narrow 85-81 loss to Australia in the bronze-medal match.

Disappointing? Sure. But the result was also the latest reminder of just how far the Cats have progressed in recent years.

"We showed already for a couple of years that we really belong," said Team MVP and tournament leading scorer Emma Meesseman ahead of the Games. "But to be a double Olympian, not just once? At the end of [Tokyo 2020], I talked with somebody who was telling me it was never going to happen again, that this was something that was never going to be repeated. And yet here we are four years later."

In less than a decade, the team has transformed from rank outsiders into serious contenders at global competitions.

In 2023, they were crowned European champions for the first time after two bronze-medal performances in 2017 and 2021. At the 2018 and 2022 FIBA World Cups, they placed fourth and fifth, respectively.

A recipient of an Olympic Solidarity Team Support Grant for the 2021-2024 period, the Cats have clearly been putting the funding, and that from the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee (BOIC), to good use.

The support enabled the team to hire a second head coach, ensure the players had access to medical staff year-round, and organise extra preparatory matches ahead of the Games.

Those were the tangibles, the direct benefits to the team. What the Cats gave back in return, the intangibles, had a much more profound impact: inspiring the Belgian Olympic team to its best performance in a century, raising the status of women's basketball at home and around the world, and contributing to gender equity at the Games, to name but a few.

As one of three teams in the Belgian delegation for Paris 2024, the Cats had a galvanising effect on the entire squad, according to BOIC President Jean-Michel Saive. "I could see and feel how important it is to have team sports inside the delegation," said Saive, adding that the country's Olympians had historically excelled at individual sports.

"It brings more dynamic, more self-confidence for the whole team. It really lifts the team to another level."

It certainly did. Team Belgium went on to claim its most medals at an Olympic Games in 100 years, securing 10 podium finishes at Paris 2024, second only to the 13 it enjoyed at Paris 1924.

Saive added that it was important for the Belgian public and partners to see that the nation is strong in team sports, not just in individual ones.

And the fans are definitely taking notice. At a Paris 2024 qualifier in Antwerp, the Cats pulled in a crowd of 13,700 people, a record for a women's sports event of any kind in Belgium. Following the Games, they became the first women's national team to surpass the 10,000-spectator mark in EuroBasket qualifyer when they welcomed 10,614 fans to a game against Lithuania in Antwerp.

"The Belgian Cats are a great example of what's possible when talent, success and support come together at the right time," said FIBA Europe Executive Director Kamil Novak, who cited the team's historic EuroBasket triumph in 2023, a generational talent in Emma Meesseman, and a "fun-to-watch brand of basketball" as factors contributing to their popularity.

The Cats also contributed to Paris 2024 becoming the first-ever gender-equal Olympic Games in terms of athletes, while helping Team Belgium close its own gender gap. The BOIC sent a delegation to Paris that was 49.4 percent women – 85 female athletes and 87 male athletes – an increase from 44.7 per cent at Tokyo 2020 and 35.2 per cent at Rio 2016.

So, while the Belgian Cats may have fallen just shy of their own goals in Paris, they left the French capital with their heads held high, having delivered a slam dunk in terms of legacy in a number of important areas.

↓ The Belgium women's basketball team had every reason to smile at Paris 2024, exceeding expectations with a fourth-place finish.

IOC Subsidies for NOCs' Participation in the Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games

IOC Subsidies for NOCs' Participation in Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games support NOCs before, during and after each Games. For the Gangwon 2024 Winter YOG, Olympic Solidarity covered the full travel costs for each NOC delegation, along with accommodation in the Youth Olympic Village. This ensured broad and equitable global participation, particularly for smaller or less-resourced NOCs.

For the Olympic Games Paris 2024, each NOC received financial support amounting to USD 20,000 to cover their operational and logistical expenses. In addition, Olympic Solidarity covered the travel and accommodation expenses for NOC officials, easing the financial burden associated with sending teams to the Games. To further assist athlete preparation, each NOC could also receive up to USD 15,000 for participation in pre-Games training camps held in France. Following the conclusion of the Games, a post-Games subsidy was provided to each NOC based on the number of athletes they had competing, helping to cover a part of the overall expenses linked to their participation.

These measures reflect Olympic Solidarity's strong commitment to enabling universal access to the Olympic Movement by reducing financial barriers for NOCs at every stage of the Games cycle.

Athletes Games Services

The NOC Relations Athletes Games Services Unit dedicated 2024 to supporting the organising committees of the Gangwon 2024 Winter YOG and the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. They aimed to align operational plans and service delivery with the needs and expectations of NOCs and their athletes.

During the Winter YOG in Gangwon, the IOC team in the Youth Olympic Village received positive feedback from NOCs on their overall experience of the Games. They praised the high-quality competition venues and noted very few operational issues, with many service levels exceeding expectations – particularly the departure process. NOCs also appreciated the opportunity to train young coaches and administrators in managing a multi-sport event.

In preparation for Paris, the IOC NOC Engagement Group actively participated in the planning process to ensure NOC perspectives (athletes and team officials) were integrated. After successfully completing the Games, the team collaborated with the Organising Committee, the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC), and various IOC departments to gather insights. They conducted surveys and debriefs to improve the delivery of Athletes Games Services and the Olympic Village.

Overall, the atmosphere in the Village and the venues were well received and widely praised by all participants, although challenges arose with the dining hall and athlete transport. Athletes highlighted the Olympic Village as a unique aspect of the Games, ranking it among the top five motivations for competing at the Olympic Games.

> "[As athletes, we recommend] to preserve the essential role of the Olympic Village in creating a unique Games experience and serving as a high-performance environment for the athletes."

A Paris 2024 Olympian answering the IOC Athlete Survey

NOC Uniform Support Programme

The product of a successful collaboration between the IOC, the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI) and WFSGI members, which include some of the world's leading sports goods brands, the NOC Uniform Support Programme started in 2016 at the Olympic Games in Rio. A true solidarity initiative, the programme provides NOCs in need of assistance with competition-compliant uniforms and sports equipment, ensuring athletes are able to compete on a level playing field, proudly wearing Olympic-standard uniforms that bear their NOC name and emblem.

In Paris, athletes in the programme were equipped by 15 participating WFSGI member brands:

- Seven lead brands: Mizuno, Nike, adidas, Asics, Puma, New Balance and Under Armour
- Eight sport-specific brands: Speedo, Arena, Descente, Yonex, Decathlon, Orbea, Endura and MAKO. Decathlon, MAKO (Horizon Sport Creation) and Yonex were supporting the programme for the first time.

By the end of Paris 2024, the programme had supported close to 2,000 athletes from 94 NOCs across five editions of the Olympic Games: Rio 2016, PyeongChang 2018, Tokyo 2020, Beijing 2022 and Paris 2024.

↓ Opening Ceremony of the Gangwon 2024 Winter YOG.

UNIFORM SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR PARIS 2024

88 NOCs	445 Athletes
15 Brands	

Source: WFSGI

Pre-Games training camps give small nations big boost ahead of Paris 2024

French towns prove perfect springboards for ONOC, Panam athletes

For larger National Olympic Committees (NOCs), organising training camps ahead of the Olympic Games is a time-honoured tradition. For many smaller NOCs, however, the financial and logistical demands that such camps require make them largely unachievable.

Until recently, that is.

Olympic Solidarity offered pre-games training camp subsidy in its 2017-2020 plan under the IOC Subsidy for NOCs participation in the Olympic Games programme. The main objective is to prepare Olympians to be at their peak physically at the Games. But no less important is helping them acclimate to the host country, bond with other athletes and the local communities, and create a positive, lasting legacy for the Games.

Designed to support athletes from smaller NOCs, ONOC and Panam Sports pool the Pre-Games Training Camp subsidies provided by the Olympic Solidarity and organised multi-sport pre-games training camps in France ahead of Paris 2024.

The Oceania National Olympic Committees (ONOC) hosted its pre-Games training in Divonne-les-Bains, while Panam Sports selected Mulhouse as its base. Both towns are located about 500km southeast of Paris.

"We come from very small islands, so the athletes and officials found the transition in Divonne, because it's a quaint town, very easy," said ONOC Executive Director Inoke Bainimarama. "It was like a home away from home for us."

ONOC worked with Olympic Solidarity to make the entire process as easy and cost-effective as possible for its NOCs. By centralising the funding arrangements, ONOC took ownership of all payments in addition to the coordination of logistics such as accommodation, transport and catering.

"It saved us valuable time and resources, especially since we can only send a small team to the Olympic Games," said Melei Melei, Secretary General of the Tuvalu Association of Sport and National Olympic Committee. "I believe centralising services like this is essential for Oceania, given our unique geography and scale."

↓ The Samoan rugby sevens team performed the haka, a traditional Maori dance, during a Bastille Day reception hosted by the mayor of Divonne-les-Bains.
© ONOC/Shivneel Narayan

In total, 39 athletes from eight sports, 28 coaches and 17 other personnel from 11 Pacific Island NOCs registered to participate in the Divonne camp.

Panam Sports welcomed an even larger delegation to Mulhouse and its surroundings – the largest ever, in fact. Some 211 participants from 31 NOCs took part, including 114 athletes from 15 sports and 74 coaches.

The Panam camp opened on 14 July, two weeks ahead of the Opening Ceremony, giving all the athletes plenty of time to get over jet lag and get into some serious Games' preparation.

When they arrived, the athletes found everything they would also require at the Games themselves: world-class infrastructure and facilities, equipment, accommodation, food, and more. It was, as Panam Sports Sport Director Andrea Carvajal put it, like organising a small version of the Olympic Games immediately before the actual Games.

"The athletes and NOCs were so happy because they didn't have to worry about anything," said Carvajal. "I spoke with the coach of an Olympic medallist from weightlifting, and he told me, 'You need to keep doing this because for us it's very important to focus on the athletes, their training and all their needs, instead of looking for accommodation, checking to see if the food is good, if they have protein, etc.' It was very important to them to have somebody to take care of all that instead of doing it by themselves."

↑ Olympic Scholarship-holder for Paris 2024 Tasi Limtiaco (Federated States of Micronesia) trained in Divonne-les-Bains before making a splash at the Games, his second, in the men's 100m breaststroke.
© ONOC/Shivneel Narayan

Mulhouse and Divonne both organised numerous cultural and social events that provided ample opportunities for the athletes and public to interact. At the same time, the Continental Associations ensured that a number of training sessions were open to schoolchildren and the general public to encourage cross-cultural exchange and to promote Olympism and the Olympic values.

"I am really grateful," Panamanian gymnast Karla Navas said after a meet-and-greet with 70 local schoolchildren during the camp. "It's one more experience sport can give us, that Panam Sports gives us, and I'm thankful to all the kids. They see us as role models and dream of one day being like us. It has been an amazing experience that helps us as athletes."

As the Olympians from both continents departed their respective training camps to compete at Paris 2024, it was clear that the unifying power of sport had once again worked its magic: the athletes would all be taking a little piece of their adopted French communities with them, while the positive impact they left behind would likely be felt for years to come.

Passing the torch: Athletes Games Services at the Games and the art of the Olympic knowledge transfer

From debriefs to secondments, the NOC Athletes Games Services team helps future hosts turn lessons into legacy

On the surface, Olympic Games debriefs appear to be a relatively straightforward process of inquiry and analysis: What worked? What didn't? And how can things be improved for future editions?

But with an undertaking as large and complex as the Olympic Games, any such transfer of knowledge requires detailed planning and effective collaboration to be executed successfully.

Over the years, a number of measures have been introduced to help future OCOGs distil the vast amount of data and information they receive into manageable, actionable insights – all tailored to their specific editions with the best interests of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and their athletes in mind.

Chief among them are the post-Games debriefs. The Paris 2024 Debrief was jointly organised by the IOC and the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) on 21 and 22 November in Lausanne. Featuring representatives from a wide cross-section of NOCs from different continents, the gathering allowed future OCOGs to learn not only from the experiences, best practices and issues of Paris 2024, but also from the feedback the NOCs provided on how to rationalise and optimise service levels.

It also gave those future OCOGs the opportunity to pose vital questions to those who lived the experience: 26 NOCs representing all continents and a range of delegation sizes provided feedback on their Paris 2024 journey.

"The debriefs are a really great opportunity for future OCOGs to sit and listen to the previous host and IOC," said Danielle Lopez, National Olympic and Paralympic Committee Services Director at LA28. "But we're also there to say 'Wait, when you said that, what did you mean by it? Why was it an issue? If you could do it again, what would you have done differently?'"

Only by probing deeper, Lopez suggests, can future OCOGs better assess whether a particular issue is relevant to them. Contextualisation is key, requiring the right questions to be asked at the right time "to really leverage the power of the feedback."

Another transfer-of-knowledge initiative the IOC has implemented during Games' time is the organisation of NOC focus groups. NOCs are invited to share feedback on topics such as planning, pre-Games communications, Games operations, and more. The sessions provide real-time insights that are then compiled and analysed before recommendations are made at the conclusion of the final meeting.

Similarly, all Chefs de Mission are asked to fill in a questionnaire on the different services provided by NOC Athletes Games Services, jointly with ANOC, at the Games. Feedback is also received from the Olympians who participated in Paris via a separate questionnaire conducted by the IOC Athletes' Department.

Since London 2012, the Athletes Games Services Unit has offered staff from future OCOGs the opportunity to work alongside the IOC as secondees. The programme provides staff from NOC/NPC Relations and Services and Village Management teams with a real-time opportunity to observe the day-to-day activities of the Olympic Village and the roles performed by an OCOG National Olympic and Paralympic Committees Services team.

The programme allows the Athletes Games Services Unit to show the secondees what is working well and what isn't, and to explain to them how issues arose and how they were dealt with, all with an eye to avoiding similar occurrences at their edition of the Games.

"Working directly with the IOC behind the scenes gave me a much deeper understanding of how they operate and how they collaborate with NOCs," said Antonella Cerasino, NOC Relations Manager Europe and Africa for the Milano Cortina 2026 Organising Committee. "It was valuable because I previously only saw that from the outside – it helped me build stronger working relationships going forward."

Familiar as they are with both Village operations and their OCOG colleagues, the secondees help manage tours with members of future hosts and Olympic city authorities. This is an excellent opportunity for them to highlight areas they feel are most relevant or pose the greatest risk to their edition of the Games.

Cerasino was a secondee in Paris 2024 for two weeks, where she assisted with everything from Opening Ceremony preparations to compiling statistics for the IOC. Meeting NOC representatives face-to-face was especially beneficial, she said, as the interactions gave her a much better understanding of their needs and perspectives.

"I could listen to them directly, understand their challenges, and think about how to respond in terms of our own edition of the Games," she said. "That's key to building trust and ensuring better service."

Through debriefs, focus groups, questionnaires and on-the-ground experience, the Athletes Games Services Unit has developed a robust and multi-layered system not just for transferring Olympic knowledge but for transferring understanding as well.

And that's a victory not only for future Olympic Games but for all NOCs and athletes that attend them.

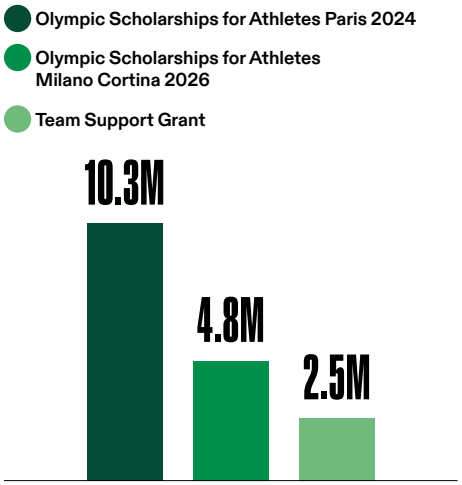
↓ The Paris 2024 Debrief in Lausanne offered participants a chance to unwind at the World Archery headquarters.

Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026

Olympic Scholarships for Athletes

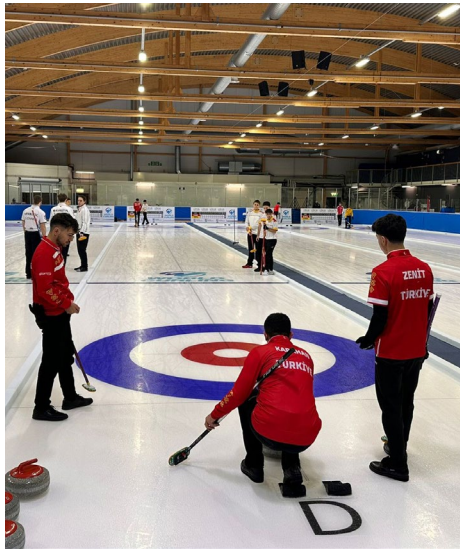
By the end of the second year of the programme, 364 athletes from 77 NOCs were taking part in this programme, aimed at supporting them in the lead-up to the next Olympic Winter Games. In addition to these 77 NOCs, 14 larger NOCs, who had delegations exceeding 50 athletes at the last Winter Games, offer their athletes support through the tailor-made option of this programme, providing these NOCs with enhanced flexibility in the allocation and use of this support.

OLYMPIC GAMES UNIVERSALITY PROGRAMMES 2024 ALLOCATED BUDGET (USD)



↓ A Technical Training Course for Coaches hosted by the NOC of Azerbaijan, with the support of Olympic Solidarity's Entourage programmes.

↓ Turkish hopefuls benefitting from a training initiative funded by the Olympic Solidarity Youth Athlete Development programme.



ATHLETES AND ENTOURAGE

Athlete Career Transition

Olympic Solidarity's Athlete Career Transition (ACT) programme provides technical and financial support to NOCs to help Olympians prepare for life after sport. This includes assistance with education, career planning, and entrepreneurship opportunities, such as the Athlete365 Business Accelerator course. Athletes from 58 NOCs benefitted from the 89 activities of this programme in 2024.

NOC Athletes' Commission Activity Grant

The NOC Athletes' Commission Activity Grant empowers athletes and reinforces the development of a robust global network for athlete representation. NOCs may use the grant to support initiatives proposed by their existing athletes' commissions or, in fewer cases, to help establish a new commission — though the majority of NOCs (200) already have one in place. In 2024, this grant was requested by 108 NOCs.

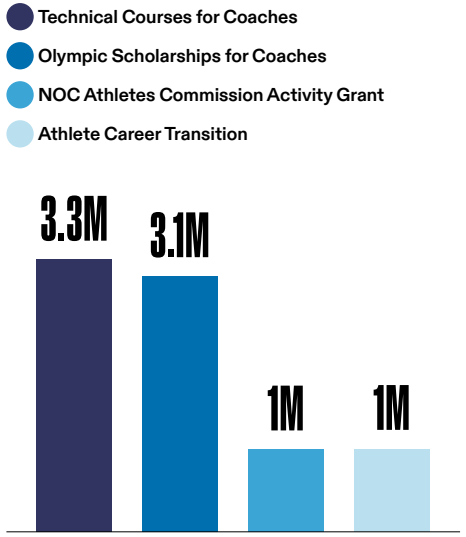
Technical Courses for Coaches

This programme offers active coaches recognised by their national federations (NF) the opportunity to attend courses in both general and technical areas, including training planning, physical conditioning, mental preparation, and nutrition. The training courses conducted in 2024 reached 7,660 coaches, including 2,250 women.

Olympic Scholarships for Coaches

This programme, targeted at coaches recognised by their respective national federations, supports continuous professional development through training in sports sciences, sport-specific training, or tailor-made programmes offered by high-level training centres, universities, or institutions operated by International Federations (IF). In 2024, Olympic Solidarity awarded 244 scholarships to coaches, including 94 women, from 119 NOCs.

ENTOURAGE PROGRAMMES 2024 ALLOCATED BUDGET (USD)

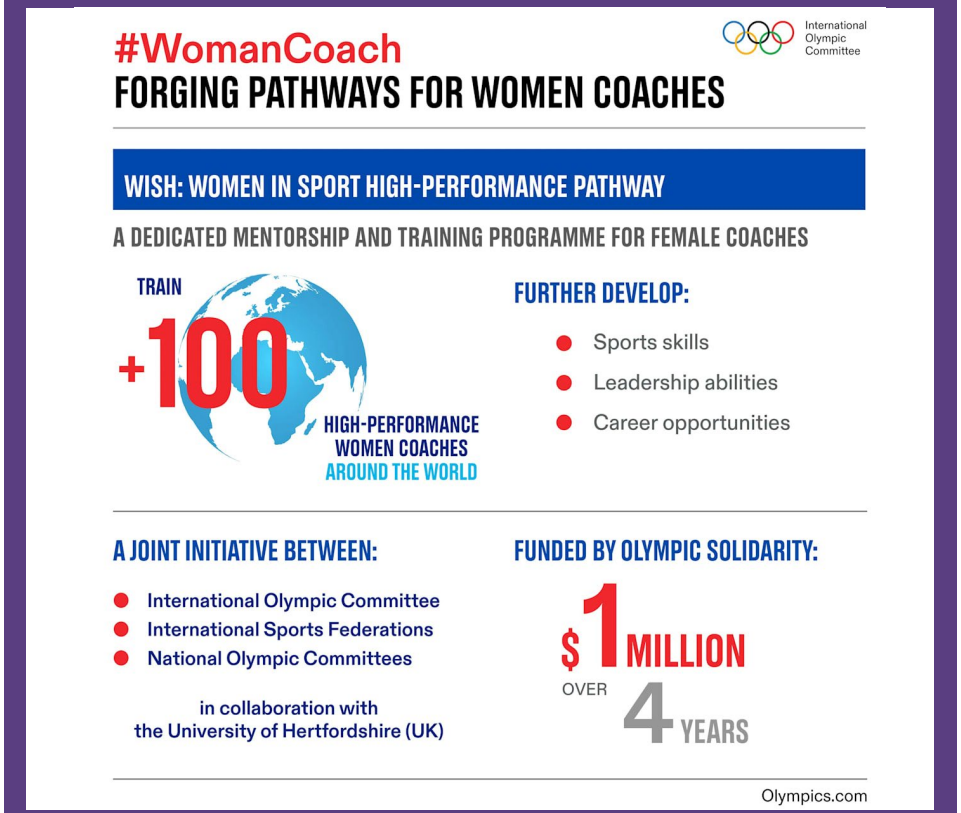


WISH Programme

Although Paris 2024 made history by reaching full gender parity among participating athletes, a real gender gap still exists today in the athletes' entourage, where the number of women holding leadership roles such as that of Chef de Mission, Technical Official and coach remains remarkably low. At Paris 2024, only 13 percent of coaches were women.

Aiming to increase the number of female coaches, the IOC started the Women in Sport High-Performance (WISH) pathway in May 2022, after a successful pilot from 2019 to 2021. Designed in collaboration with academics from the University of Hertfordshire (UK), practitioners and coaches, WISH aims to equip women with the skills and confidence to break down barriers and succeed in elite-level coaching. In total, 13 WISH participants were accredited in Paris: 10 in coaching roles in seven sports, and three others as team leader, co-commentator and commentator.

To date, WISH has provided mentoring and leadership sessions to 120 coaches from 22 sports and 59 NOCs.



Development of National Sports System

This programme supports NOCs in enhancing and building their foundational coaching structures and sports systems by establishing a medium- or long-term action plan for one or more Olympic sports.

Youth Athlete Development

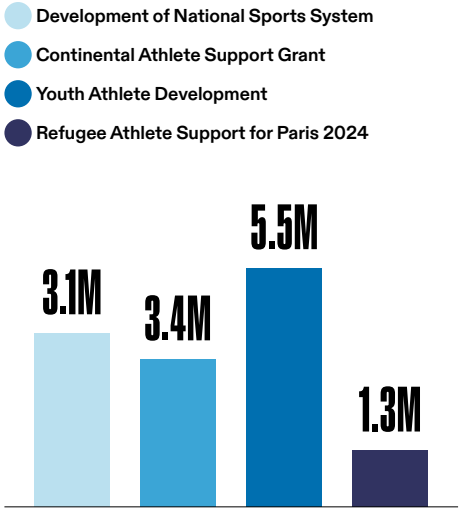
2024 celebrated not only Paris 2024, but also the Gangwon 2024 Winter YOG. NOCs took the opportunity of the three options offered by the Youth Athlete Development programme to support their young athletes:

- Support for the identification and training of young athletes, an option sought by 67 NOCs for a total of 68 projects in 2024.
- Support for athletes aiming to participate in qualification events for the Summer and Winter YOG. For the 2021-2024 period, this option was selected by 43 NOCs – primarily for the Winter YOG Gangwon 2024. NOCs from all five continents were able to apply for up to USD 30,000 to support their young athletes on the pathway to Gangwon 2024.
- Training opportunities for young athletes offered by IFs. During the 2021–2024 period, this option was offered by 34 IFs and benefitted 838 NFs from 168 NOCs. Of these national federations, 166 were for winter sport NFs, affiliated to seven IFs.

Continental Athlete Support Grant

The Continental Athlete Support Grant supports NOCs in training their continental-level athletes for world, continental, and regional multi-sport events, with the ultimate goal of preparing them for the Olympic Games. Over the 2021-2024 period, 161 NOCs benefited from this programme.

SPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES 2024 ALLOCATED BUDGET (USD)



Empower state of mind: WISH pathway takes aim at gender gap in coaching

Leadership programme paves way forward for elite female coaches

With an equal number of male and female athletes, the Olympic Games Paris 2024 marked a historic milestone for gender equity in sport.

But while significant improvements have been made on the field of play, progress around it – specifically the athletes' entourage – continues to lag. In leadership roles as well as coaching, a sizeable gender gap remains.

Seeking to address this imbalance, Olympic Solidarity introduced the Women In Sport High-Performance (WISH) pathway for the 2021-2024 cycle.

Supported by a USD 1 million budget over four years from Olympic Solidarity, the programme is designed to empower elite female coaches by giving them the tools needed to succeed at the highest levels of sport. Each programme runs for 21 months and includes online sessions, mentoring activities and a residential week at the Institute of Sport at the University of Hertfordshire in the United Kingdom.

While participants receive instruction on leadership and sport-specific skills, they are also taught the importance of fundamentals such as mentoring, networking and confidence building. These latter elements, according to the instructors, have been some of the most rewarding aspects of the course for many taking part.

"Sometimes all someone needs is for one person to believe in them. WISH gives people that belief," said legendary UK rowing coach Rosie Mayglothling, one of the pioneers of the project that eventually evolved into the WISH programme. "We're not just ticking boxes. We're actually helping women see what they're capable of and giving them the tools to make it happen."

To date, 120 coaches from 22 sports and 59 NOCs have benefitted from the WISH pathway. Ten WISH alumni had coaching roles at Paris 2024 in seven sports.

One of those graduates was Happiness Burutu, who was part of the coaching staff for the Nigerian wrestling team at Paris 2024. Burutu said her time on the WISH programme had a profound effect on her ahead of the Games, instilling her with greater confidence that allowed her to better communicate with her athletes.

"It provided me with both the knowledge and the support I needed to perform at my best," she said. "Leading up to Paris 2024, the programme helped in developing me not just physically but mentally and emotionally, too."

Another WISH alumnus that coached at Paris 2024 was Ireland's Noelle Morrissey. The high-performance athletics trainer says she was so moved by the stories of her peers on the programme that it inspired her do all she can to support women in elite coaching roles going forward.

"The WISH programme opened my eyes to the struggles of women in different contexts, making me realise that, despite my own challenges, I was relatively fortunate," she said. "I've been called 'lucky' by male coaches instead of being recognised for my skills and experience. But after hearing the stories of my WISH peers, I'm motivated to become an advocate for women in elite coaching — something I hadn't even considered before."

One of the most powerful elements of the programme developed organically: a support network was formed between the different cohorts and the instructors that has quickly become a source of strength for the participants. According to WISH Project Director Elizabeth Pike, it has the potential to be a true game changer.

"What we talk about on the programme is for the participants to not only develop themselves, but also to develop others," said Pike, the Global Winner of the 2024 IOC Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Champions Award. "The collaboration has been key. We brought the initial four cohorts back together again for our Coach Connect programme and they're saying they've got a massive support network now. They're learning from each other, they're supporting each other, they're giving each other visibility."

As in any field undergoing a cultural shift, seismic change within the elite coaching ranks isn't expected to happen overnight. But with time, hard work, and an ever-expanding support network, progress is inevitable.

"Now that we've got these amazing graduates who are out there advocating for change and demonstrating the positive impacts," Pike concluded, "we will absolutely see changes going forward."

This all bodes well for an increase in the number of female coaches at upcoming editions of the Olympic Games as well as many other national, continental and international competitions worldwide.

↓ Led by Project Director Elizabeth Pike (seated fifth from right), the WISH pathway has already benefitted 120 coaches from 22 sports and 59 NOCs.

Lasting legacy: World Taekwondo ticks all boxes at Olympic Solidarity training camp in Pan Am region

Athlete, entourage and development goals successfully met ahead of Paris 2024

When an athlete describes your training camp as transformative, saying she wouldn't have been able to qualify for the Olympic Games without it, your work as an organiser can confidently be deemed a success.

Hats off, then, to World Taekwondo (WT) for planning and delivering the World Taekwondo Olympic Solidarity Camp in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from 2 to 10 April 2024.

As one of the key activities in the newly created Sport Development cluster's Youth Athlete Development programme for the Olympic Solidarity 2021-2024 plan, the sport-specific training camps for athletes under the age of 23 were offered to National Olympic Committees (NOCs) with fewer than 50 athletes at the previous edition of the Olympic Games.

The programme is an extension of earlier engagement with a limited number of International Federations (IFs) selected to test the approach during the previous plan.

In the 2021-2024 period, 34 IFs heeded Olympic Solidarity's call to get involved, with WT proposing a series of training camps in Oceania, Africa and the Americas, each ending with a continental qualification tournament.

The main objective of the Santo Domingo camp was to provide promising young Taekwondo athletes with the technical expertise, tactical tools, experience and knowledge of electronic scoring equipment to succeed in qualifying for and participating at Paris 2024.

This goal was clearly achieved. Of the 16 athletes from the camp who competed at the Pan American Qualification Tournament on 9 and 10 April, six booked their tickets to Paris.

Among them was 19-year-old Maria Sara Grippoli Gagliardo of Uruguay, who credited an increased familiarity with the electronic scoring system as being the most valuable takeaway from training.

"The camp was key; it served as a physical and technical foundation," said Grippoli Gagliardo, who would go on to become the first Taekwondo Olympian in Uruguayan history. "It helped us improve by training with other countries at different levels and qualify for Paris."

The training camp brought together 56 athletes from 16 Pan American NOCs in addition to 17 national team coaches. In coordination with WT, Olympic Solidarity covered the costs of travel, accommodation, meals, access to the facilities and training equipment.

The legacy of the camp extended far beyond the Pan Am qualifier. The athletes gained valuable knowledge and experience they would otherwise have not had access to, while local practitioners will benefit from the Protector Scoring System, electronic head gear and other equipment donated by WT and its sponsors to the Dominican Republic Taekwondo Federation at the conclusion of the camp.

The NOC of the Dominican Republic and the national federation, meanwhile, upskilled their competencies in event administration and operations, once again demonstrating themselves to be reliable hosts after successfully organising the 2003 Pan Am Games and other regional events.

Coaching in the region also received a significant boost, which was a key part of WT's legacy planning. The global governing body committed to working with local coaches before, during and after the training camp. This included theoretical learning provided online and face-to-face instruction from two renowned figures in Taekwondo coaching: Professors Dongwan Lee and Youngin Bang.

↓ With coach Mayko Votta by her side, Maria Sara Grippoli Gagliardo (URU) used the World Taekwondo training camp in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, as a springboard to Paris 2024. © World Taekwondo

Lee and Bang schooled coaches and athletes alike on subjects ranging from individual training techniques and match understanding to tactical strategies and the roles and rights of coaches, referees, and administrators in managing competitions. Additionally, as Grippoli Gagliardo noted, participants received detailed instruction on how to use electronic scoring systems effectively, thereby enhancing their ability to score points.

"We believe that while elite athlete training is essential, it is equally important to provide coaches with proper training programmes and management skills for their athletes" said Seungmin Lee, Head of Member Relations and Development at WT. "This is why, after attending our camp, the relationship between the athletes and their coaches becomes stronger, and they are able to build mutual trust."

For the six athletes who secured their spots at Paris 2024, the impact of the World Taekwondo Olympic Solidarity Camp in Santo Domingo was immediate and, indeed, transformative. But thanks to strengthened coaching networks, enhanced event-hosting capabilities, and a new generation of athletes equipped with the skills, equipment and confidence to compete, the legacy of this initiative should continue shaping the future of taekwondo in the Pan American region for years to come.

The wheel deal: African cycling gaining momentum on world stage

Long-term UCI development initiatives yield early returns

↑ Young riders attend an African Strategy 2025 training camp in the Bugesera–Nyamata region of Rwanda ahead of the Kigali Road Cycling World Championships. © UCI

When it comes to the development of African cycling, the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) emphasises that it's a long, steady climb and not a sprint.

And yet by almost any measure, 2024 was already a standout year for the continent.

In July, Eritrean cyclist Biniam Girmay became just the third African (and first from outside of South Africa) to win a stage of the Tour de France, while a month later no fewer than 26 African cyclists, including a record 14 women, competed at the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

Throughout the year, momentum continued to build towards Kigali (Rwanda) 2025, which is set to become the first UCI Road World Championships to be held on African soil in the competition's 103-year history.

The UCI has long invested in the sport in Africa, which has historically been hindered by a lack of funding, access to equipment, opportunities to compete at elite competitions, technical training and more. Following the announcement of the Kigali event, the UCI has only intensified its efforts – and on multiple fronts.

Together with the UCI, the NOCs have been putting Olympic Solidarity grants to effective use in Africa, in particular those tailored to Youth Athlete Development, Development of National Sports Systems and Technical Courses for Coaches (TCC), as well as a number of individual scholarships for coaches.

All four were active in 2024, with the joint UCI/Olympic Solidarity programme Africa 2025, created under the Youth Athlete Development umbrella, helping NOCs support their athletes with training and competition opportunities through targeted support via the IFs. The African nations of Cape Verde, Eritrea and Zimbabwe all took advantage of the programme, as well as of the Technical Courses for Coaches and Development of National Sports System programmes, which support the short- and long-term development of coaches, officials and the overall sport system. Individual scholarships were given to coaches to attend sport sciences training programmes or cycling-specific training.

"Every year we collaborate closely with the IOC and the NOCs to best support developing cycling in different countries," said Jean-Jacques Henry, Education and talent detection manager at UCI. "And when it aligns well with the UCI strategy, we can create a comprehensive plan with many different funds to make sure it's not just a drop in the bucket. We believe it's better to pool our resources to have a bigger overall impact on the development and progression of cycling," said Henry. "The results come quicker, and, in the end, the national federations can grow by themselves if we invest enough money."

African athletes, coaches, mechanics and officials have all benefited from UCI assistance over the years, including Eritrean hero Girmay, who was scouted as a teenager at the African Junior Championships in 2018 before being invited to train at the World Cycling Centre (WCC) in Aigle, Switzerland. Girmay also received assistance from Olympic Solidarity as a scholarship-holder for Paris 2024.

Other top African riders are increasingly being tapped for mentorship and coaching roles, such as those nurtured through the Technical Courses for Coaches programme and individual scholarships. One such example is Olympian Tsgabu Grmay of Ethiopia, who recently retired from a successful professional career that began in 2011 for Team UCI.

"I have a long-term plan to apply what I learn with my experience to help the youth and African cycling to make it greater and bring more champions," Grmay said during a visit to Olympic House in Lausanne in 2024. "I'm really keen to do the job and the work and to prove to the world that we still have more to show."

It's a sentiment shared by fellow TCC participant Violette Irakoze Neza of Rwanda, herself a former pro rider currently working with her national federation as a coach of male and female youth cyclists. Neza said she hopes to have a positive impact on all riders getting started in the sport in Africa, but especially girls.

"They need to meet other girls who can become their role models, who they can learn from," she said. "I'm going to keep motivating the girls, showing them it's possible. Start by having fun cycling, after that they can go far."

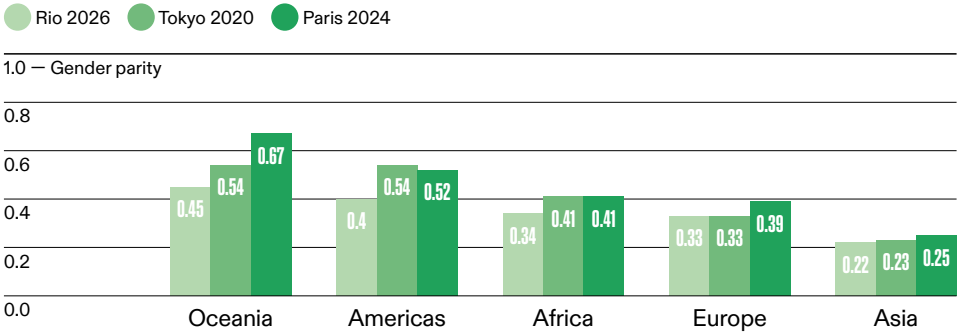
Just how far African cycling can go remains to be seen. But thanks to an abundance of talented athletes, excellent development initiatives implemented in a collaborative and comprehensive way by numerous sports organisations, and the global spotlight about to shine on Kigali 2025, the progress seen in 2024 is only expected to accelerate in the years to come.

GENDER REPRESENTATION IN NOC DELEGATIONS AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES

ACCREDITED PEOPLE IN NOC-RELATED ROLES AT PARIS 2024 BY GENDER

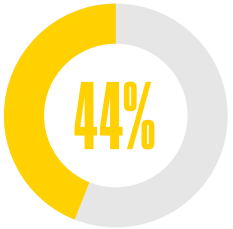
Role	Men	Women
NOC	**18,781 (66%)**	**9,635 (34%)**
Athletes	5,772 (51%)	5,559 (49%)
Coaches	4,482 (87%)	650 (13%)
Medical Officials	1,368 (69%)	607 (31%)
Other NOC personnel	6,009 (71%)	2,510 (29%)
Team Leaders	848 (79%)	219 (21%)
Team Management	302 (77%)	90 (23%)

GENDER EQUALITY SCORE BY NOC REGION ACROSS DIFFERENT EDITIONS OF GAMES



GENDER REPRESENTATION IN NOC LEADERSHIP

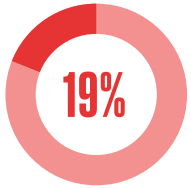
NOC EXECUTIVE BODIES



44% of NOCs have more than 30% women on their Executive Body

NOC PRESIDENTS

NOC SECRETARIES GENERAL



Women

Men

STRONGER TOGETHER

Responding to extraordinary circumstances

In response to exceptional situations impacting NOCs, the IOC aims to enhance the effectiveness of its efforts by collaborating with organisations within the Olympic Movement, especially the Continental Associations (CA) of NOCs concerned. In 2024, the IOC joined forces with various CAs to provide assistance to NOCs harshly affected by unexpected circumstances.

Directly affected by the ongoing civil war in the country, the NOC of Sudan received support from the IOC. Sudanese athletes received assistance for their preparation and participation in the Olympic Games Paris 2024 through the Olympic Scholarship Programme for athletes. This allowed five female and four male athletes to prepare for the Olympic Games. Three Olympic Scholarship-holders participated in the Games, making up the majority of the delegation from Sudan competing at the Paris Games. A joint emergency assistance fund of USD 150,000 was allocated to the NOC by the IOC, Olympic Solidarity and ANOCA with the aim of supporting the NOC leadership maintain its operations.

> “With the support of the IOC, the Olympic Games Paris 2024 can act as a beacon of hope for my fellow citizens and provide proof of the resilience of the Sudanese, even under such difficult circumstances.”
>
> Ahmed Abu Elgasim Hashim,
> President of the NOC of Sudan

During a visit to the IOC in April 2024, Jibril Rajoub, President of the NOC of Palestine, presented the “Palestinian Sports Revival Plan”. President Bach agreed to coordinate an international effort to mobilise funding for rebuilding destroyed sporting facilities in Palestine. He emphasised the role of sport in fostering hope for peace. Both the NOC of Palestine and the NOC of Israel are recognised by the IOC and operate with equal rights within the Olympic Movement. On this occasion, the IOC reiterated its commitment to supporting athletes from both NOCs in participating in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The IOC maintained constant communication with both NOCs to facilitate their athletes' participation in international competitions, including qualification for Paris, despite challenges like travel restrictions. These efforts underscored the importance of sports as a unifying force, even in times of conflict. The delegation of athletes from the NOC of Palestine in Paris was composed of eight athletes, two women and six men. They competed in athletics, boxing, judo, shooting, swimming and taekwondo.

> “Our athletes are looking forward to proudly representing the NOC of Palestine in Paris alongside all the other NOC teams from around the world.”
>
> Jibril Rajoub, President of the NOC of Palestine

Advancing governance

With the Olympic Games in mind and universality as a core value, our support to NOCs implementing basic principles of good governance and applying them to their preparation for the Games was a key element ensuring athletes' participation.

In 2024, the IOC Institutional Relations and Governance Services Unit provided such support in various areas. It reviewed and updated the statutes of 55 NOCs, leading to formal approval by the IOC of the statutes of 13 of them by the end of 2024. Updating the design of institutional emblems was also on the Unit's list of services, delivered to 12 NOCs. In addition, during 2024, and particularly after the Olympic Games Paris 2024, 48 NOCs held their elections, with the results being acknowledged by the IOC. The Unit monitors these processes closely and may have to intervene, when requested or when necessary, to make sure that the NOC elections take place in accordance with the Olympic Charter and the NOCs' own statutes. Unfortunately, the year of the Olympiad was no stranger to conflict, with most cases related to internal governance issues or disputes with government authorities.

Among the NOCs that the Unit helped to resolve a conflict was the NOC of Afghanistan. Since the Taliban regime seized power in August 2021, women and young girls have been dramatically deprived of their rights, particularly in the areas of education, employment and freedom of movement and expression. The Taliban authorities have also banned them from participating in sports activities. This led the IOC to urge the Afghan NOC, which operates from exile, and the Afghan General Directorate of Physical Education and Sports to do everything in their power to convince the country's highest authorities to lift these restrictions. Unfortunately, no progress was made. The IOC nonetheless continued to provide direct support to Afghan athletes, in particular through Olympic Solidarity scholarships for their preparations and participation in the Games. In view of the Games in Paris, the IOC reinforced its ongoing work with the NOC of Afghanistan to ensure that female athletes would be able to participate. As a result, Afghanistan fielded a gender-balanced team in Paris, composed of three women competing in athletics and cycling, and three men in athletics, swimming, and judo. Flagbearers Fariba Hashimi and Sha Mahmood Noor Zahi carried the pre-Taliban tricolour flag at the Opening Ceremony. No Taliban officials were allowed at the Games.

In India, the NOC has been facing internal governance issues and disputes for a number of years. To secure the participation of Indian athletes in Paris, the IOC Institutional Relations and Governance Services Unit maintained a constant dialogue with the NOC in the lead-up to the Games. The NOC entered a total of 112 athletes, 46 women and 66 men, and won six medals - one silver and five bronze. Unfortunately, tensions in the NOC arose again soon after the Closing Ceremony and the governance issues could not be resolved despite the IOC's efforts. In October 2024, direct funding from the IOC and Olympic Solidarity to the NOC was frozen, except that directed specifically to the athletes (e.g. Olympic scholarships). This measure applies until further notice, with the hope that there will be more clarity within the NOC as soon as possible for the good of the athletes and the Olympic Movement in India.

In March 2023, following a request by the 11th Olympic Summit in December 2022, the IOC issued recommendations for International Federations and international sports event organisers on the participation of athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport in international competitions. These recommendations provided a pathway for athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport to return to international competitions under strict conditions, and only as Individual Neutral Athletes (AIN). In October 2023, the IOC Executive Board suspended the Russian Olympic Committee, as a consequence of its unilateral decision to include, as its members, four regional sports organisations that were under the authority of the NOC of Ukraine. This was a breach of the Olympic Charter because it violated the territorial integrity of the NOC of Ukraine. Suspension means that an NOC is not entitled anymore to operate as such, and that any funding from the Olympic Movement is put on hold. With the Games fast approaching, the IOC demonstrated its strong will to allow athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport to nonetheless compete in Paris, with the IOC Executive Board approving their participation under strict eligibility conditions in December 2023. In all, 32 AIN competed across 10 different sports and disciplines, without any incidents on or off the field of play. These athletes qualified by obtaining quota places through the existing qualification pathway and meeting the eligibility requirements of their respective IFs (i.e. no additional quota places were granted to AIN athletes). The eligibility of all qualified athletes, and their support personnel, was reviewed by the Individual Neutral Athlete Eligibility Review Panel, who evaluated their eligibility against the Principles of Participation, and had the ultimate authority to invite them to participate in the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

Another conflict situation that attracted a lot of attention and required support from the Institutional Relations and Governance Services team was that affecting the NOC of Guatemala, originally suspended in October 2022 due to undue external interference in the NOC election process. Following intense efforts from the IOC and political changes in the country, the situation evolved positively. On 19 March 2024, the IOC Executive Board decided to provisionally lift the suspension of the NOC, allowing it to compete as normal in the Olympic Games Paris 2024. The participation of the team was very successful, with Guatemalan shooter Adriana Ruano Oliva winning the first-ever Olympic gold medal for her country. Her story below illustrates how the collaboration of all parties led by the IOC played an essential role in allowing athletes from Guatemala to participate in the Games under their national flag.

Adriana Ruano Oliva: Golden gun delivers defining moment for Guatemala at Paris 2024

Provisional lifting of NOC suspension allows nation to celebrate in style

Standing on top of the medal podium at the Olympic Games Paris 2024, Guatemalan trap shooter Adriana Ruano Oliva admits to being overcome by a mix of emotions.

She had just won her nation's first Olympic gold medal, and first of any colour by a Guatemalan woman. For added emphasis, she set a new Olympic record in the final to secure her medal.

As her country's flag began to rise into the mid-afternoon sky, Ruano Oliva's initial thoughts were of her father, whom she lost just three weeks before her first Olympic appearance at Tokyo 2020.

But when her national anthem began playing for the first time in the 128-year history of the modern Olympic Games and a small army of Guatemalans on hand to support her began belting out the opening words – "Guatemala feliz!" or "Happy Guatemala!" – Ruano Oliva was suddenly consumed by a feeling of gratitude.

"I felt really honoured to give this to my country," the 29-year-old said. "It was an amazing feeling."

Fortunately for Guatemalans the world over, the country was afforded the opportunity of celebrating its greatest Olympic showing replete with all its national trappings – team colours, flag, anthem. Because things could have unfolded much differently.

Only a few months earlier, the NOC of Guatemala was mired in a year-and-a-half-long suspension, a measure taken by the IOC Executive Board to protect the NOC from government interference in its internal governance.

While the suspension was necessary to protect the Olympic Movement in the country, it nevertheless had a significant impact on Guatemalan athletes. They were now barred from representing their country at Olympic events, including the Games, and instead had to compete as neutral athletes. No national flag or anthem would accompany them on their Olympic journey.

The impact was also acutely felt throughout the NOC, with most employees having to cease work as salaries were no longer being paid. "It was a very difficult time for our NOC and Guatemalan sport in general," explained Lizza Alonzo, NOC Communications Director. "The atmosphere became one of fear, uncertainty and sadness. Many people lost their jobs."

↑ Trap shooter Adriana Ruano Oliva is the golden girl of Guatemala after becoming her nation's first Olympic champion at Paris 2024.

One NOC administrator who continued to work throughout the suspension was Director of International Relations Neville Styles. Despite facing numerous hurdles, Styles said the NOC was appreciative of the IOC's support in resolving the situation in line with the Olympic Charter and the fundamental principles of the Olympic Movement.

Standing by the NOC throughout, the IOC began by rejecting the outcome of the elections resulting from the government interference in October 2021. It advocated for a fair process to support the NOC's efforts to review and approve its statutes (December 2021), and for fresh NOC elections to be held in March 2022 under the supervision of the IOC and Panam Sports.

In addition to clearly reiterating its position on numerous occasions, the IOC maintained an open dialogue with IOC-recognised office-bearers and government authorities, while closely monitoring the progress of appeals before the constitutional court in Guatemala.

After months of negotiations, including a crucial face-to-face meeting in Lausanne between the IOC President and Guatemalan President Bernardo Arévalo, the IOC-recognised office bearers of the NOC elected were reinstated on 16 March 2024. They were given full authority to lead the NOC under IOC-approved NOC statutes from December 2021 and the Olympic Charter.

As a result, the suspension was provisionally lifted by the IOC Executive Board on 19 March 2024, allowing for Guatemalan athletes to participate at Paris 2024 without restrictions.

The decision paved the way for Ruano Oliva – who began her Olympic journey as a volunteer at Rio 2016 and, impressively, also volunteered at Paris 2024 after winning her gold medal – to write her name into Olympic and Guatemalan history, a feat that earned her a hero's welcome upon returning home.

To this day, she still gets stopped in public by appreciative strangers.

"All the people tell me that I made them proud that day," she said. "They just say, 'Hey, thank you. Thank you for what you did for the country. Thank you because you are an inspiration for my kids.' For me that's the most special thing."

NOC ELECTIONS, STATUTES AND EMBLEMS IN 2024

48 NOCs held elections that were recognised by the IOC

12 NOCs reviewed their institutional emblem

55 NOCs reviewed their statutes

Reinforcing administrative capacities

IOC Immersion Stay programme for NOCs

The fourth edition of the IOC Immersion Stay programme for NOCs took place from 25 November to 6 December 2024. Seven staff members from the NOCs of China, Denmark, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Nauru, Nigeria and Vietnam were selected for this edition.

↓ Participants of a Sports Administration Course organised by the NOC of Malaysia with the support of Olympic Solidarity's NOC Management and Knowledge Sharing programmes.

Launched in December 2022, with two editions per year and one during the year of the Games of the Olympiad, this programme is aimed at creating a closer relationship with NOC staff members, help us learn from each other and improve our ways of working together. By the end of 2024, staff from 27 NOCs had completed the two-week programme.

NOC Management and Knowledge Sharing

NOC Administration Development

Olympic Solidarity provides each NOC with an annual Administrative Subsidy of USD 45,000 towards their running costs, plus an Additional Administrative Subsidy of USD 15,000 for those NOCs whose main revenue source is Olympic Solidarity. In 2024, the Administrative Subsidy was taken up by 197 NOCs, and the Additional Administrative Subsidy by 24. NOCs also receive assistance for projects aimed at strengthening their administration in areas such as IT, capacity building, finance, strategic planning and communications. In 2024, 94 projects in this field, undertaken by 68 NOCs, were supported.

National Courses for Sports Administrators

The goal of this programme is to enhance the capacity of NOCs and their stakeholders by providing management training to national and regional sports administrators. These training courses are delivered by the NOCs using standardised materials and course frameworks developed by Olympic Solidarity. In 2024, 57 NOCs completed 147 Sports Administration Courses, with 5,765 participants, while 632 participants from 24 NOCs completed a total of 28 Advanced Sports Management Courses.

International Executive Courses in Sports Management

Olympic Solidarity offers access to high-level international sports management training through MEMOS (Executive Masters in Sport Organisation Management). Sixty-eight participants from 56 NOCs began their studies in 2024, in the cohorts of the MEMOS XXVII in English (33 participants) and MEMOS X in Spanish (35 participants). Among these participants, 59 were supported by Olympic Solidarity (31 in the English programme, and 28 in MEMOS X in Spanish). They are set to complete the programme in 2025.

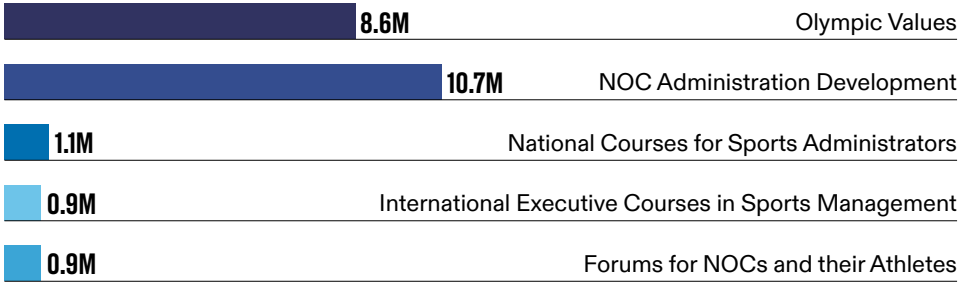
NOC Exchanges

NOC Exchanges are designed to help strengthen NOCs' administrative structures and are thus an important part of organisational learning. In 2024, 12 projects were approved.

Forums for NOCs and their Athletes

Forums provide a unique opportunity to bring together NOCs, athletes and Olympic Solidarity to discuss specific topics. This includes biennial athletes' forums, organised and funded in close collaboration with the Continental Associations of NOCs, their Continental Athletes' Commissions and the IOC Athletes' Commission. In 2024, Olympic Solidarity funded two NOC Regional Forums (one in Malaysia, the other in Bahrain) and two Continental Athletes' Forums (Oceania in Fiji in October and Americas in the Dominican Republic in November).

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH 2024 ALLOCATED BUDGET (USD)



Tracking Triumph – Bahrain Olympic Committee launches National Sports Database

New digital hub poised to shape future of Bahraini sport

Success for the Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC) came in many forms in 2024.

Topping the list was the country's performance at the Olympic Games Paris 2024, where Bahraini athletes doubled the nation's overall medal tally to eight after winning two gold, one silver and one bronze.

Setting Bahrain up for future Olympic glory was the launch in spring 2024 of the BOC's National Sports Database.

The cornerstone of a broader digital transformation currently under way at the BOC, the National Sports Database centralises data on athletes, coaches, and officials to enable stakeholders to track key metrics such as performance, attendance and health.

The long-term goal is for the National Sports Database to transform decision-making in areas such as training, development and the scouting of talent, while improving coordination between departments and national federations to aid in the long-term development of athletes and preparation for the Olympic Games.

"For the National Olympic Committee, the database has streamlined athlete management, reporting and preparation for multi-sport events," said Mohammed Rafiq Bhatti, Head of IT Infrastructure at the BOC. "For the athletes, it ensures they are visible, their progress is tracked, and their development plans are personalised, and data-informed. It has also improved communication between athletes, coaches, and administrators."

The switch to a digital hub marks a sea change in the way the BOC operates. In the past, the NOC kept track of such data using a combination of spreadsheets, manual records and isolated files across different departments, according to Bhatti. "This decentralised approach," he said," led to inconsistencies, duplication of data, and difficulties in tracking athlete progress over time, especially across different competitions and Olympic cycles."

The BOC concluded that an upgrade was necessary following an internal review of its processes in 2020 and a needs-assessment exercise conducted in early 2021. The findings led the BOC to apply for an Olympic Solidarity grant in 2021 through the NOC Management Initiatives programme, which is a sub-programme of the NOC Administration Development programme.

While Olympic Solidarity encourages all NOCs to enhance their operations through the adoption of IT tools and infrastructure, it also cautions that upgrades be done in a manageable, sustainable way that corresponds to their individual needs. Rushing into such an endeavour can quickly become overwhelming in terms of workload, management and expense.

Supported by Olympic Solidarity funding, the BOC ensured it had a clear vision and a practical blueprint in place from the outset to guide the execution of the project. This gave the NOC a solid understanding of the work, costs and timeline required and provided the flexibility to switch gears when necessary, during the implementation phase.

Certain issues arose even with the roadmap in place. The initial data migration, for example, was hampered by the variety of sources and inconsistent formats previously used, while stakeholders also required time to adjust to the new digital workflow.

To address these challenges, the BOC implemented onboarding workshops, phased system rollouts and established a dedicated support team. End users were also actively involved to ensure the platform aligned with their practical needs.

From the planning stages to its launch on 30 April 2024, the National Sports Database project took almost three years to materialise. Still in progress are a public-facing version of the National Sports Database portal as well as a fan-engagement app, both designed to create stronger connections between the athletes and public in Bahrain.

Thanks to a number of late nights by the in-house IT team and the external developers hired for the job, the BOC now has a powerful new tool with which to monitor the progress and results of athletes and officials over time.

"We've been highly successful in achieving our objectives" Bhatti said. "The database has become the central reference point for athlete information, significantly improving communication and planning. Our national federations now have access to updated athlete profiles, and decisions are more data-driven than ever before."

With its National Sports Database now in operation, the BOC has laid the groundwork not just for future podium finishes but for a smarter, more connected sporting ecosystem that will serve Bahrain and its athletes for years to come.

↓ Under the discretion of the NOC, all national federations, sports associations, clubs, athletes and officials in Bahrain will eventually be housed on the National Sports Database.

BUILDING A BETTER WORLD THROUGH SPORT

Olympic Values

The Olympic Values programme helps NOCs to realise the Olympic Movement's vision of creating a better world through sport, advancing the IOC's Olympism365 strategy. The programme strives to achieve results on an organisational level, ensuring that sports organisations are safe, sustainable and inclusive, and at community level, helping more people to be active while promoting Olympism, values-based education, culture and heritage.

The Olympic Solidarity Olympic Values programme provides four main types of financial assistance. In 2024, they were distributed as follows:

- initiatives/projects run by the NOC or with a partner organisation: 128 NOCs ran 295 projects;
- scholarships for training/education: 84 NOCs benefitted from 170 training scholarships;
- participation in the International Olympic Academy (IOA) Sessions for National Olympic Academies (NOAs) and Young Olympic Ambassadors: 102 NOCs benefitted from 152 allocations;
- Olympic Day celebrations: 155 grants were allocated.

Initiatives

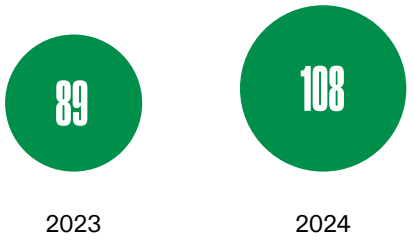
Through the Initiatives component, each NOC selects the priorities most relevant to its national context and turns them into concrete action — funding diverse projects that support the programme's goals, from making sport safer and more inclusive to boosting sport participation or promoting Olympic values and heritage.

↓ With support from Olympic Solidarity's Olympic Values programme, the Gabonese Olympic Committee ran a project that promoted sport and physical activity among girls.

Training and Education Scholarships

This segment of the Olympic Values programme has further developed the capacity of NOC administrators and members of athletes' entourage through scholarships for participation in IOC-recognised education and training opportunities in areas such as safeguarding, sports medicine, physiotherapy, mental health, antidoping, and Olympic studies. In 2024, Asian NOCs capitalised on these opportunities, receiving 64 out of a total of 170 scholarships, while African NOCs were close behind with 37 scholarships. There has also been a notable increase in the diversity of scholarship recipients, with 59 per cent of the scholarships allocated to women.

IOC CERTIFIED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS



IOA Sessions for NOAs and Young Olympic Ambassadors

NOCs continued to leverage the opportunity to send participants to the IOA sessions for NOAs and Young Ambassadors. These sessions unite individuals passionate about promoting Olympism in their respective countries. In 2024, for the first time, participating NOAs were invited to present videos showcasing their projects from the previous year. NOAs play a crucial role as partners to NOCs in implementing national-level initiatives.

Olympic Day

Olympic Day remains a highly popular annual event for NOCs worldwide, with the vast majority organising celebrations across all continents. During Olympic Day 2024, the IOC's "Let's Move" campaign engaged over 15 million people globally in physical activities. This initiative, organised in collaboration with the World Health Organization, featured community events, digital challenges and social media activations that encouraged daily movement.

↓ Children celebrating Olympic Day in Belize.

Safeguarding the Games: Welfare Officers play vital role at Paris 2024

Athletes' well-being at heart of new protective measures spanning the globe

Amid the spectacle of over 200 national teams vying for gold at the Olympic Games Paris 2024, there was another team quietly driving the success of the Games behind the scenes: the NOC Welfare Officers.

In total, 154 NOC Welfare Officers worked in Paris to safeguard the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of athletes and staff, playing a vital role in the delivery of the Games.

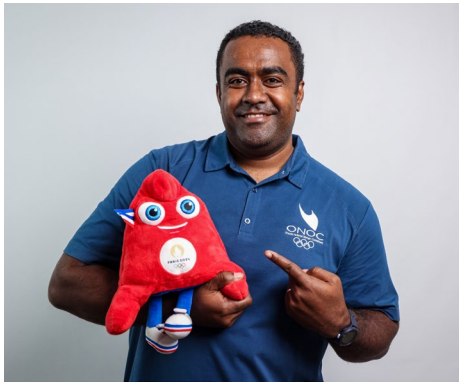
Since Beijing 2022, Welfare Officer accreditation is offered to staff members of participating NOCs at each Olympic Games. To qualify, Welfare Officers must either be nationally certified mental health professionals or internationally certified safeguarding practitioners.

Many of the Welfare Officers in Paris were graduates of the IOC Certification: Safeguarding Officer in Sport programme funded by Olympic Solidarity's Olympic Values programme. By the end of 2024, some 343 safeguarding officers from over 99 countries had officially been certified through the programme.

One graduate who went on to play an important role in Paris was Sefanaia Takape, Sports Education and Safeguarding Officer at the Nauru Olympic Committee. As a Scholarship-holder for the 2021-2024 period, Takape sharpened his competencies in the prevention of and response to harassment and abuse in sport during the seven-month course, which featured seven online workshops. Separately, Safe Sport workshops were held in Fiji in 2023 and in Guam in 2024.

As part of the Oceania National Olympic Committees (ONOC)'s shared services impetus for Paris 2024, in which 15 Pacific Island nations under the ONOC umbrella benefitted from the communal use of expertise in different areas of the Olympic Games mission, Takape was one of three Welfare Officers tasked with overseeing the well-being of athletes and staff for the entire region in Paris.

At the Games, he interacted daily with Olympians and ONOC staff within the Athletes' Lounge and on the sidelines of competitions. As a member of the safeguarding community of practice in Paris, he also attended numerous workshops and lectures facilitated by the IOC on topics selected to address current challenges and opportunities in safeguarding.



↑ Sefanaia Takape (Nauru) was one of three Welfare Officers for the Pacific Island nations at Paris 2024.
© ANOC/ Annice Lyn

Takape said the most impactful moment for him during the Games was being able to prevent further online abuse of one of the athletes under his care. The IOC offered Artificial Intelligence-powered cyber abuse protection services for the first time at Paris 2024, flagging 2.4 million potentially abusive message during the Games. The tool enabled safeguarding teams to provide support to affected athletes within 24 hours.

Takape added that it was highly beneficial for ONOC to have Welfare Officers from the region at the Games, noting that their presence helped bridge cultural differences, especially when addressing sensitive issues such as harassment and abuse.

"I think safeguarding is important to ONOC because Oceania athletes through their culture have an underlying issue of a culture of silence," said Takape, underscoring a challenge experienced in other parts of the world as well. "Pacific people often view speaking up as sign of weakness, and they would be even more reluctant if the officer is from another country or cultural background."

He continued: "ONOC is pushing for more safeguarding officers from the region, so that athletes and officials feel comfortable sharing their issues of abuse and harassment. This personally motivates me, to be that hand of support for our athletes and to somehow remove that culture of silence and ensure that Oceania athletes compete at their best and have podium finishes more often at Games to come."

The Welfare Officers were part of a larger suite of safeguarding initiatives in place at Paris 2024. Other measures included a mental health hotline and the first-of-its kind Athlete365 Mind Zone, a space of tranquility within the Olympic Village where athletes could relax, disconnect and get mentally prepared for competition. A Safe Sport Zone was integrated within the MindZone as a safe space where athletes could consult trained IOC staff for safeguarding assistance and mental health support. All of these services were rated highly by the athletes and Chefs de Mission at the conclusion of the Games.

Beyond the Games, global attention on athlete welfare is also on the rise, with NOCs, International Federations and other sports organisations showing a growing commitment to safeguarding. Eighty-four NOCs now have trained safeguarding officers, for example, and the establishment of safeguarding hubs worldwide further underscores this expanding priority.

As the Olympic Movement looks to the future, the presence of Welfare Officers at the Olympic Games and other safeguarding initiatives are no longer just a luxury, they are essential for the protection of athletes everywhere.

Olympism365

In 2024, the IOC continued to advance its mission to use sport as a catalyst for sustainable development, aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through Olympism365, the IOC's strategic framework for sport and social impact, the IOC supported over 550 initiatives across 176 countries, engaging millions worldwide.

The Olympism365 strategy spans three pillars:

1. Thematic portfolios of sport for social development projects delivered in collaboration with global sport, health and social development organisations, including UN entities, public development banks, NGOs and others. To date 29 global collaborators and 141 local implementing organisations are working with the IOC across 19 multi-stakeholder consortia in 102 countries;

2. Direct investment in NOCs through Olympic Solidarity's Olympic Values programme. In 2024, 128 NOCs ran close to 300 projects to champion Olympic values. Notably the Campeonas en Movimiento project, led by the NOC of Paraguay, using football to empower girls with life skills, safeguarding and employability training. With the support of Olympic Solidarity, the project's scope has been expanded to offer training workshops to 120 coaches and leaders on inclusive and gender equitable sports practices, as well as digital skills and entrepreneurship.

3. IOC-led signature initiatives including IOC Young Leaders, Olympic Values Education Programme, Athletes Giving Back, P&G Athletes for Good, Olympafrica O!Yes programme and Let's Move.

Olympism365 thematic portfolio areas include:

- Sport, Education and Livelihoods: Empowering 50,000+ youth in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa through skills training and access to education and jobs.

- Sport, Health and Active Communities: Promoting physical and mental well-being through community sport and physical activity programmes for up to one million people in 5 countries, and capacity building for 1,000 health and sport professionals and 250 organisations across 50 countries.

- Sport, Equality and Inclusive Communities: Advancing gender equality and inclusion, including funding and technical support for 21 projects in 13 countries across Oceania in 2024 through the Oceania Impact Network Play for Equity Fund.

- Sport, Peace and Safe Communities: Strengthening the role of sport in youth crime prevention strategies including through capacity building and demonstrative community projects in Indonesia, The Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

- Urban Development: Mainstreaming sport in urban planning processes as a catalyst for healthier, more inclusive and sustainable cities, including through training for 125 local government and community development organisations.

Innovation was a key focus in 2024, with a first set of sport and Olympism-based initiatives funded through the Olympism365 Innovation Hub to deliver social impact in targeted communities. The IOC also continued to strengthen the global sport-for-development ecosystem through capacity building initiatives for practitioners and orgainsations including on impact measurement, and sport-for-development policy research.

IOC Young Leaders programme

The IOC Young Leaders programme empowers passionate young individuals by providing the skills, resources and platforms needed to create sustainable, sport-based solutions to local challenges. These include promoting inclusion, well-being, education, equality, and sustainability. The initiative directly supports the IOC's Olympism365 strategy, strengthening sport's role in achieving the SDGs. In 2024, programme participants engaged with athletes and fans both at the Gangwon 2024 Winter YOG and at the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

IOC YOUNG LEADERS

25

IOC Young Leaders and 25 nationalities selected for the 2021-2024 programme

9

IOC Young Leaders and 9 nationalities selected for Paris 2024

5

more IOC Young Leaders at Paris 2024 in volunteer positions

350

stories shared on Instagram

260,000

reached on social media

5,000

photos taken at the booth

Championing change: IOC Young Leaders win over Olympic fans at Paris 2024

Youth-managed booth inside Champions Park gives new voice to the IOC's Olympism365 strategy

If bright ideas were awarded medals at the Olympic Games, the concept behind the creation of the Champions Park would have been a shoo-in for gold at Paris 2024.

Not far behind was the decision – another masterstroke – to place the IOC's Young Leaders' booth inside said park.

Located at the Place du Trocadéro at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, the Champions Park was open free of charge to the general public, who came in droves during the Games to celebrate in person with Olympic medallists and to take in the day's sporting action at boisterous public viewing parties.

With over a quarter of a million people filing through the gates of the Park during the nine days it was operational, there wasn't a better location anywhere in France for the IOC Young Leaders to engage with the public.

Their mission? "Primarily to spread the message of Olympism365 – that sport is not just for a particular time of year or during sports events," said Grace Towobola, IOC Young Leader from Nigeria. "Sport can be used for development at any point in time by anybody, every day."

The choice to place the booth in a public space inside the Champions Park helped deliver the IOC's highest-profile activation targeting Olympic fans at Paris 2024.

"I think we really benefitted from this atmosphere, being in the Park," said Paul Bayet, IOC Young Leader from France and a Paris 2024 volunteer. "We were probably their only face-to-face touchpoint with the Olympics and the Olympic Movement, and they were likely to remember the interaction."

Nine Young Leaders worked in shifts at the booth to promote the Olympic values and showcase the positive impact sport can have on society. Their work supported wider efforts throughout the Games to showcase the IOC as an organisation committed to youth empowerment and the contribution of sport to the UN SDGs.

Visitors took part in a range of activities designed to demonstrate how sport can be used as a tool for development in key areas such as equality, inclusion, health and well-being, sustainability and education.

They included interactive exercises, sustainable handcrafting workshops and Q&A sessions with Olympians, Paralympians and other notable figures, including Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus.

↑ Among the many activities offered at the IOC Young Leaders' booth at Paris 2024 were Q&As with notable figures, including Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Professor Muhammed Yunus. © Panasonic

"Visiting the IOC Young Leaders at the Champions Park during Paris 2024 was deeply energising," Professor Yunus said. "It was a space filled with ideas, action and the energy of young people who refuse to accept the world as it is. The passion, creativity and sense of purpose I saw in the IOC Young Leaders are exactly what the world needs right now, and I always feel honoured to stand beside them."

In addition to interacting in person with the public, the IOC Young Leaders were heavily active on social media. Curating over 5,000 images during their time at the booth, they shared some 350 stories on Instagram alone, reaching an estimated 260,000 people on all social media handles.

Having welcomed 566 Olympians, 5,653 special guests, and 280,000 Olympic fans over the course of its existence, the Champions Park more than lived up to Paris 2024's motto of being "Games Wide Open."

And it provided the IOC Young Leaders with the ideal platform on which to actively contribute to the host's vision of Games that were as accessible, inclusive and connected to the city of Paris as possible.

Delphine Moulin, Director of Games Celebrations for Paris 2024, explained: "The IOC Young Leaders and Olympism365 booth as an international source of exchange – led by youth and touching on a range of important themes – was perfectly suited to public interaction and contributed to our strategy. From a Paris 2024 perspective, it was well received and tailored to our target audience.

"Our vision was to bring sport and the athletes to the heart of our projects," she added. "It was also to host Games Wide Open and create links between sport and culture. We combined all of that at the Champions Park."

Olympic Refuge Foundation

The Olympic Refuge Foundation (ORF) is an independent international non-profit organisation that helps provide access to safe sport for young people affected by displacement, operating at the crossroads of sport, development, and humanitarian aid. Since its founding, the work of the ORF has contributed to almost one million young people affected by displacement experiencing safe sport. In 2024, the ORF ran programmes in nine countries: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, France, Jordan, Kenya, Türkiye and Uganda.

One of its key initiatives is the Sport Coach+ programme, which is delivered in partnership with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement mental health and psychosocial support Hub and funded in collaboration with the IOC and Olympic Solidarity through a USD 569,000 Ukraine emergency response fund. This programme has been expanded across seven countries impacted by the Ukrainian displacement crisis and aims to train 2,500 coaches to provide trauma-informed care and psychosocial support through sport, helping to rebuild lives and foster healing in affected communities.

In addition to the Refugee Athlete Support (see p. 12), the Sport for Refugees Coalition — which is co-convened by the ORF alongside UNHCR and the Scort Foundation — is another key programme where NOCs play a significant role. In late 2024, the ORF led a data collection and reporting exercise to assess progress on the implementation of the Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Sport for Inclusion and Protection. The data revealed that, in the 12 months following the Global Refugee Forum 2023, where the Pledge was made, Coalition members (including the ORF) helped over 445,000 displaced individuals access sport and play-based activities across 82 countries. By the end of 2024, 33 NOCs had joined the pledge.

↓ Participants of Game Connect, an ORF programme supporting the mental health and well-being of young people in Uganda.

SPORT FOR REFUGEES COALITION

140+
pledging entities

33
National Olympic Committees

65
NGOs and civil society organisations

24
International and National Federations

14
governments

5
private sector entities

1
UN agency

83
countries

445,000
people affected by displacement accessing sport and play-based activities

2,000+
sports clubs and initiatives supported

6,000+
individuals trained to lead sport-based activities

109
sporting spaces created or refurbished

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Financial information on Olympic Solidarity and IOC funding for NOCs can be found in the IOC Annual Report 2024 on the IOC website:
www.olympics.com/ioc/documents/international-olympic-committee/ioc-annual-report

Financial information about the Olympic Refuge Foundation can be found here:
Resources | Olympic Refuge Foundation
www.olympics.com/en/olympic-refuge-foundation/resources

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Statistics
Unless otherwise stated, all statistics are from the IOC Annual Report 2024 or from the NOC Annual Review 2024. Figures are based on data as reported by NOCs themselves.

Images
IOC / Getty Images unless otherwise specified

Notes for the reader
Opinions expressed in the stories are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect the position of the IOC or Olympic Solidarity.

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Supporting NOCs and their athletes every step of the way to Paris 2024 and beyond