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“The possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to promote human rights for all and to strengthen universal respect for them.”

Youth, Children, and future Generations (UDHR, Preamble, Article 1, 26.2, 28, 29)

Sports and physical activities are part and parcel of education, as included in article 29 of the Convention on the rights of the child¹ in which it is stated that “the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child’s personality, talent and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential”. In fact, according to the Olympic philosophy “learning takes place through a balanced development of body and mind²”. Moreover, sport has also the capacity of supporting school attendance, and this aspect might be particularly important in deprived and poor settings.

In our Cicetekelo Youth Project in Zambia, that is an emergency and long intervention programme for children living and/or working on the streets, caring for 320 children, male and female, aged between 9 and 22 and providing also prevention interventions for vulnerable or at risk children/youth from ending up on the streets, sport is also a way to escape from the difficult situation that children are facing in the compounds and to fight for a better future.

Clement, Head of Department of Cicetekelo Youth Project, sees the importance of sports as a way to remove the children and youth from the street and the compounds, especially during their free time. He says: “Cicetekelo is offering a chance to children and youth to play basketball, netball, volleyball, tennis and football. Right now it’s also cooperating with the Ndola golf club to offer some golf lessons, especially to the children. But Cicetekelo is open to the local community and for this reason all the outsiders can use the facilities and spend time in a safe and protect environment”.

In working with children and youth coming from the street, it is really necessary to give them rules. Sports is probably one of the best ways to learn to respect rules and also to respect the others. At the same time, most of the sports offered by Cicetekelo are team sports. It’s very important for these children and youth to understand the importance of working together to reach a goal. The ability to work together towards a common goal is an essential part of team sports, as well as an important life skill. Participation in team sports allows children and youth to feel a sense of community and learn to respect their teammates, coaches and also

¹ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989

² <https://www.olympic.org/olympic-values-and-education-program>

the opponents. Playing with children and youth coming from other compounds and from other environments also helps the children of Cicetekelo to see other realities and to gain confidence. It is an opportunity to show off their skills, it allows them to see the results of their work and take pride in their team's accomplishments. We also think that our children and youth can find in sport a way to increase their self-esteem. In addition to all of these benefits, participating in team sports provides children with the opportunity to learn patience, perseverance and hard work.

Just to give a testimony of perseverance and hard work from a girl of Cicetekelo: "Annesse. 13 years old was selected by the U13 Basketball National team of Zambia to go to Namibia and play an international tournament. For the first time in her life she left the compound and she visited other cities and provinces in Zambia. She had the chance to meet a lot of new people and she became the vice-captain of the U13 Copperbelt team. Annesse joined Cicetekelo 4 years ago and after one year, when Cicetekelo opened the basketball academy, she started to play and joined the team. Day by day she became a leader but unfortunately after few months she broke her arm. But... her strength and her determination were too big and for more than a month she continued training with her broken arm. The other children were also surprised by that and she became a real example of commitment. "

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