



Sport: universal instrument for development and peace building



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Mesdames et messieurs,

je voudrais tout d'abord remercier M. Michael Kleiner, qui représente ici le Bureau de l'année internationale du sport et de l'éducation physique des Nations Unies, d'avoir bien voulu accepter notre proposition de tenir aujourd'hui la Table Ronde sur le thème : "Le sport: instrument universel au service du développement et de la paix". Je remercie M. Ricardo Espinosa qui a accepté de tenir pour l'occasion le rôle de modérateur. Je souhaite une chaleureuse bienvenue à vous tous, Mesdames et Messieurs, qui avez bien voulu répondre à notre invitation.

Permettez-moi de vous présenter brièvement notre ONG New Humanity, que certains d'entre vous connaissent déjà, mais qui est sûrement nouvelle pour d'autres. New Humanity a été reconnue par le Conseil économique et social des Nations Unies en 1987 et jouit désormais du statut consultatif général. L'organisation, fondée en 1983, est une expression du Mouvement des Focolari, fondé en 1943 à Trente, en Italie, par Mme Chiara Lubich. Le Mouvement des Focolari est désormais présent dans 125 pays, plus de deux millions de membres en font partie et son but principal est de promouvoir un monde plus uni, ouvert à la fraternité entre les hommes. Ces dernières années, nous avons pu réaliser sur tous les continents des œuvres sociales et des projets de formation et de développement dont ont été bénéficiaires en même temps que co-auteurs des personnes parmi les plus pauvres et les plus faibles. Les membres de New Humanity s'engagent à exprimer respect, dialogue et réciprocité envers et entre les personnes, quelle que soit leur ethnie, leur religion, le milieu socioculturel auquel elles appartiennent. Ils agissent dans tous les domaines de la vie sociale, de la santé à l'éducation, de la formation des jeunes à celle des adultes, de l'économie à l'emploi, du droit aux médias. Il s'agit de stimuler institutions et organismes internationaux, gouvernementaux ou non, par l'étude et la proposition de solutions et d'interventions en faveur des populations locales, en particulier les plus pauvres, afin d'accroître toujours plus la justice et la solidarité.

New Humanity entend promouvoir, jusqu'au niveau des diplomaties et des relations entre États, une culture nouvelle, la "culture du don", dans le but de construire la fraternité universelle. Si l'on réfléchit au niveau d'interdépendance qu'a atteint le monde actuel, nous sommes convaincus que la fraternité, aussi bien en tant que méthode qu'en tant que contenu des relations entre individus et entre groupes, peut constituer un excellent point de départ. Nous sommes également convaincus que, face au croissant besoin de sécurité des hommes, le paradigme de la fraternité est un paradigme qui s'applique à tous les aspects de la vie sociale. Dans la logique de la fraternité, le bien commun et les droits de l'homme sont le centre d'inspiration, le point de départ et le but des politiques économiques et sociales.

En septembre 2003, à l'occasion de la Journée Mondiale de l'Interdépendance de Philadelphie, aux États-Unis, Chiara Lubich, présidente du Mouvement des Focolari, disait à propos: « C'est la fraternité qui peut donner aujourd'hui de nouveaux contenus à l'interdépendance. C'est la fraternité qui peut susciter des projets et des actions dans l'enchevêtrement complexe de la politique, de l'économie, de la culture et du social de notre monde. »

Aujourd'hui, nous voudrions vous présenter un des domaines dans lesquels New Humanity est engagé, le sport. Le sport, en effet, est une composante essentielle de notre société, il est capable de transmettre les règles de base de la vie sociale, parce que porteur de

valeurs éducatives fondamentales telles que la tolérance, l'esprit d'équipe, la loyauté. Le sport peut jouer un rôle important de par l'intérêt qu'il soulève, tant dans le domaine ludique que dans celui de l'esprit de compétition, si l'on relance la valeur éducative de sa pratique, en particulier auprès des plus jeunes. Nous estimons que le sport est un instrument universel au service non seulement du développement, mais aussi de la fraternité et de la paix.

Je laisse donc la parole aux autres intervenants qui vous exposeront plus en détail notre expérience en la matière.

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SPORTMEET

Sportmeet is a worldwide network of athletes and people who work in the world of sports. We are men and women of every culture, ethnicity, language, and religion who see sports as an important and positive element in society, a means to challenge ourselves and to compete with others. We want to contribute, through sports, to the building of a more united world. Sportmeet represents the world of sports in New Humanity, the NGO of the Focolare Movement at the United Nations.

The athletes and sports professionals connected with Sportmeet combine their commitment to sports in many different ways, in widely varying professions, and with various interests and diverse passions. Cognizant that the sports world interfaces with society on many levels, the primary goal of Sportmeet is to contribute to a culture of sports that will foster universal brotherhood among individuals, peoples, cultures, ethnicities and different faiths. This unity is sought above all through the practice of the "Golden Rule" present in all cultures: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." On this foundation, the objectives and methods which Sportmeet promotes are shared today by people of very diverse convictions, cultures and religions. Sportmeet stands side by side with other social projects that share a common goal: to encourage the growth of the seeds of a "culture of giving" and so nurture universal brotherhood in today's world.

Sportmeet fosters this "sports culture" through formation courses and national and international conferences. The next international Sportmeet conference will be held in Trent, northern Italy, from September 16-18, 2005, and will look at "Sports and Happiness." The theme of the 2003 conference was "A culture of defeat for a new culture of victory." Given that the sports world is battling with uncontrolled economic interests, dependence on doping, violence in sports stadiums, and others factors that threaten not only to rob sports of their beauty, but their very identity, we launched a daring proposal: "to learn to lose in order to win."

In 2004, in line with the European Year of Education through Sports, sponsored by the European Union, our annual theme was: "Be educated and educate through sports." On that occasion, we presented the project Sports4Peace, an educational program for peace that was implemented in Austria with Sportmeet's support. This project, which we will talk on today, involved more than 20,000 young people, who tried to build peace by practicing sports according to the rules of the colored Sports4Peace die: Play Hard—Do your best, Play Fair, Hang in, Take care of, Celebrate, Make a Difference. These rules helped to build peace and brotherhood among youth of different races, faiths and ages, in their schools, sports clubs and

other environments. The same youth then agreed to meet again on October 9, 2005, for a global sports rally: a 24-hour sport-a-thon by Teens for Unity of the Focolare Movement. We will see the plans for this in a short while.

Lastly, a sports culture aimed to build universal brotherhood is expressed also through concrete initiatives which encourage the practice of sports, especially among youth in developing nations or in socially disadvantaged environments. For this reason, Sportmeet has promoted activities in favour of solidarity and social awareness in various developing nations; projects whose initial stages we want to present to you.

Given all of this, the network of Sportmeet enthusiastically welcomed the UN announcement that 2005 would be “The International Year of Sport and Physical Education.” Even more, we are grateful for the UN office overseeing this initiative for having granted Sportmeet the opportunity to present its own philosophy and efforts to promote sports as a peace-building tool. For the opportunity to participate in a panel discussion at this prestigious headquarters, we would like to especially thank Dr. Michael Kleiner, Dr. Adolf Ogi, who is here for him today, and his staff. Allow me to also thank Ricardo Espinosa for having agreed to competently moderate this event.

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TOWARD A NEW SPORTS ETHIC

Contributing to a topic such as “the social value of sport as an instrument for development and peace” is an irksome task. As a political philosopher – even though today I teach Ethics of Sport and, from an academic point of view, attend to the training of Sport operators and managers – one’s contribution cannot be merely programmatic, but should also be based on one’s own statements on the critical exercise of reason.

Let us then put aside for a moment such concepts as brotherhood, peace, development - values of fundamental importance in sport - because, in this context, these concepts have undergone a radical semantic transformation that since the beginning of the Modern Age, precludes the knowledge of their most inner reality and genuine value. For this reason, it is necessary to reconsider the social life within the practice of sport from a philosophical point of view.

When applied to sport, this can be seen as a sort of demand which aims at giving foundation of loyalty and fairness in sports, in other words, giving an explanation for what is now considered to be a traditional topic: *fair play*. But, once again, the philosophical thought cannot accept anything “dogmatically” and should have the courage to debate even the contents itself as well as those “remedies” that, today, are suggested again to stem pathological forms of living sports, just like the concept concerning “formal” fairness of rules.

Therefore, my purpose is to give a rational justification to the “fair play” question and, through a series of answers to the question, to lead progressively towards the one that, in my opinion, is better able to understand two factors that I consider to be essential. The first lies in the fact that sport has its own “goodness”; the second reason is that this goodness does not concern a single competitor or player, but the entire sports community and, as a consequence,

the existential fulfilment should be related to the relationship with team mates and competitors. I believe, therefore, that it devalues sport to consider it either a means of doing something else or an instrument for unilateral and egoistic achievement.

The first and most elementary answer to the question of playing fairly can be found in a “prudential” motivation, or the simple fear of disciplinary measure: one plays according to the rules because, otherwise, one can incur a disciplinary measure. Most modern legal theories are based on such reason. Here we have, first of all, the idea that the individual practicing a sport aims at an indefinite “will of self-assertion” and that only a rule, provided with coercive power, will be able to stem it. Nevertheless, this answer can be considered in the lowest extent, because not only does it not say anything about sports itself, but it is based on a radically individualistic concept of the order among individuals.

A second answer, positioned at a higher level, though it is still quite incomplete, can be defined as a “utilitarian” answer: I play fair in order to obtain a material (economic) or social (popularity) fulfilment. In this respect, even if sports is accepted and practiced only for fear of a disciplinary sanction, it does not have an intrinsic value, yet it represents a means to objectives that transcend it. Such a vision shows an “individualistic” nature: the single athlete, in his/her quest for purposes that transcend sport, considers the other competitors or team mates as unessential and not fundamental to his/her own welfare.

The third type of answer can be defined as “traditionalist”: I practice a sport according to certain rules because, I have been taught so and do not call into question their validity. Here, for the first time, sport is in itself the purpose, not subject to conditions that can transcend it, and therefore it has a value unto itself. Yet, the contents of these rules are not criticized. With this outlook, we do not take into consideration the fact that a certain sport can be practiced in a pathological form that does not make the athletes better. From this point of view, gladiator games – if accepted by everybody – could work!

Let us now turn our attention to another possible answer to the question of playing fair, an answer that “opens” though does not exhaust the problem of what a “fair” play is. Such an answer can be defined as “contractualist”: a play according to certain rules because I established them by mutual consent with my opponents and team mates. As all political experts know, a contractualist hypothesis is hardly feasible; notwithstanding such a hypothesis is useful to find the principles upon which the rules are based. Contractualism has its origin in the fathers of Modernity, Hobbes and Kant, who solve the problem of the quest for pacification and life together between members of a community and between countries through an “artificial” legal instrument and “formalistically” understood, that is completely “heteronomous” with regard to the moral sphere. The nuclear concept of this doctrine lies in the hypothesis – postulated in the second half of the XX century by John Rawls – of the “veil of ignorance”: since I do not know what role I am going to hold in the social system, I promote a rule system in which everybody has equal opportunity to take part. This model easily applies to the quest for a game structured according to the principles of justice, which is able to justify the reason of the fairness.

But, does the formalism of the contractualistic model succeed in accounting for fair play?

I do not think so: first of all, contractualism does not say anything about the game’s nature and we know that harmony, for many reasons, can generate forms of relationships where all parties are not always afforded the same dignity. Second, contractualism, with its formalistic-juridical model, derives from a concept of the society “atomistically” understood as a sum of autarchic individuals bounding themselves within the limits of their will where the will itself is, in the end, a less evident form of utilitarianism (“do as you would have done to you”).

Also in this context, therefore, the “other” has a simply instrumental nature and not a fundamental one for the development of each of us.

Let us now consider the answer I believe it is the most complete to the question of fair play, which also means abandoning the concept itself of formal fairness and fair play, to look in the direction of a “substantive” ethic of sports. Such an answer, which could be defined as “ethical-social”, shows a complete sense of morality and it incorporates in itself a requalification of the values of peace, brotherhood and development.

In this respect, the relationship with other individuals must be constitutive for human beings, in a way that we must take into consideration that a human being fulfils himself/herself (in our case as an athlete) only through the relationship with the “other”, with his/her opponents and team mates. If we consider this human being’s original relational nature then – beyond the formalistically egalitarian legal system – we can discern a “systematic” structure amongst athletes where one is always growing “through” and “with” the others.

One follows fair play examples and one is always an example for the others. In other words, within this relational stream every athlete is always master and pupil.

Such a concept, that can also be defined “pedagogical”, if understood and applied, completely neutralizes the conflict and the unfair antagonism among competitors. In fact, every denial of the other, of his/her value and his/her dignity as an athlete, means also the loss of the sense of *our* being and of the role we hold: if one does not live well in this relational “stream”, we admittedly devalue ourselves, cease to grow and “bloom”, and, at the same time, we devalue the entire sports community in which we take part.

An “ethical-social” answer to the question of being fair in sport surpasses and, so, exceeds the concept itself of fairness as compliance with a rule, because it considers the game understood as a group of positive rules, a community of human beings in a continuous creative relationship, open to the possibility of mutual growth.

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PEACE EDUCATION THROUGH SPORT

Mister Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

it is a great pleasure for me to speak to you. First of all, I should like to welcome you and I should also like to extend a warm welcome to you from both the Rector of the University of Vienna and from the Head of the Department of Physical Education of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The topic of my presentation is “Peace Education Through Sport”, but before approaching the subject, let me express my sincere thanks to Mr Michael Kleiner and Mr Adolf Ogi on this occasion.

So, to begin, when we use the term sport in connection with peace and education, we have to be aware that sport is by no means a homogenous phenomenon. Ambiguity and heterogeneity are the main features that define sport nowadays. So to say, sport constitutes of a pluralism of values.

As you can see,

Thesis: *Sport is a complex and quite a sophisticated phenomenon. It comprises a core. This core is wrapped in a coat, and quite figuratively, it stretches its arms out to the exterior world, which is the environment that surrounds it.*

The problem is, however, that not each single part, I have just mentioned, is equally balanced for peace. Let me give you some examples:

Have you ever wondered if a PE teacher/instructor educates peace when she/he does any sport with the pupils in an atmosphere of joy, mutual respect and tolerance? Or, another example, when you think about a referee, sending off a football player who has played unfair, do you think this is a form of peace education? Or, to give you a final example, would you call that peace education when you organise numerous runs for peace in your home countries, or to put it more precisely, in your schools?

The answer, Ladies and Gentlemen, is “Yes. Definitely yes.” The answer is “Yes”, because as the topic of my presentation suggests, sport is used to promote peace in this world! Under such conditions as certain perspectives of sense, like tolerance or co-operation, and also under conditions of structure, sport contributes positively to peace in the world.

Thesis: *Peace Education Through Sport implies a certain quality of sport.*

When we talk about peace education through sport here, we have to understand three aspects: Firstly, sport seen as the core unit does certainly not incorporate a peace movement of its own during physical actions among people regardless of gender, age, culture, ethnics, or religion. Secondly, it is in the nature of sport to be a sort of symbolical competition, in which people take part, Sport usually ends up with a winner and a loser, and it can therefore mainly be interpreted as an area of structural force and as an area of something, which has a negative connotation.

Thirdly, sport can serve as a kind of trigger, which triggers off/encourages either a positive or negative reaction in people watching sporting events, for example.

Peace education through sport is, so to speak, based on the fundament of a precious and humane physical activity that is oriented on fairness and fair play. It seems obvious to say here that sport can only communicate and promote messages of peace if certain fields of force are limited to its roots.

Thesis: *“Peace Education Through Sport” implies/is inseparably associated with education to sport*

If we consider the spheres of life, sport ranks very high in status, coming directly after family/friendship and job. A case study has shown that in more than 92 % of the 126 countries, in which the study has been carried out, PE is a compulsory subject for pupils during their regular education. Only 71 % of these countries, however, only offer PE at a minimum. In the remaining 29 % sport seems not to have an educational function.

Those, Ladies and Gentlemen, who want to stress peace education through sport, are invited to make free access to sport possible, not only for children, but also for grown-ups male or female, for handicapped as well as for non-handicapped, in environments that are enjoyable.

Thesis: *“Peace Education Through Sport” implies professional and qualified guidance in sport, which is based on acceptance and tolerance*

In principle, it is the aim of education to improve the relationships among people. For that reason, the sport-pedagogical concept of peace education through sport needs/demands

competent instructors, who are able to convey basic human values, such as respect, tolerance, dignity and equality in a didactic way.

In any case, it should be the aim of peace education through sport to encourage social learning in sport by mediating social co-existence during lessons. It is also the aim of peace education through sport not to discourage exceptional efforts for successful performance. On the contrary, the power of sport when applied effectively, can be used to give peace a starting signal. In a word, Ladies and Gentlemen, if sport did not exist, we would have to invent it to promote peace. That is the answer.

Thesis: *“Peace Education Through Sport” is neither a vision, nor is it a fiction. It is the result of numerous empirical studies*

The participation in physical activities inevitably leads to the development of a specific sports moral, which is also important for the behaviour in contexts apart from sport. It is quite remarkable that there are gender-specific differences within physically active adolescents concerning the importance of fairness, justice, honesty, equality, consideration and peace. The results are that physically active female adolescents regard these values more important than female adolescents who do not do any sport. Young female athletes also exceed physically active boys when it comes to this topic. The results are based on the thesis of the two kinds of moral.

This thesis clearly shows gender-specific differences. It stresses the importance of the instinctive behaviour of women caring for others in interhuman relationships. By participating in professional competition sport, the compatibility of values of fairness – here also of fighting for a peaceful world- with performance-related values gets more and more complicated. It is well documented that peace-oriented actions are increasing with educational achievement. A positive relationship between teacher and pupil in a pleasant atmosphere, as well as a successful school career contribute positively to peaceful actions. Furthermore, the “contact-hypothesis” is supported, whereupon ethnically mixed school classes behave more consensus-related.

Thesis: *Those who propagate “Peace Education Through Sport” have to look for social acceptance and further allies*

Sport leaves marks in many different ways. Sport serves as a medium for values, like “discipline”, “endurance”, “performance”, “teamwork”, “fairness”, “health”, “enforcement”, or “courage”. Sport is employed successfully in numerous programmes, such as in addiction prevention programmes, integration programmes, etc. Due to its enormous flexibility, sport is in great demand in times of pluralism. Economy, politics, advertising, and education need sport. The message of sport is understood by people of all nations. In sport, there is no need for tedious translations, in order to be able to understand. Those, who link peace with sport, have to look for systems, institutions and organisations, which offer as much acceptance as possible for the concerns of a peace education through sport.

Thesis: *“Peace Education Through Sport” as a sport-pedagogical programme is urged to evaluate itself and to document the achievement of its goals.*

Those, who link sport with peace are urged to analyse connections between sport and peace. *Sportmeet* - in two concrete projects – is anxious to analyse the connection between the extent of physical activity and the significance of peace. The programme of “Peace Education Through Sport” has to position its contributions and its achievements to peace education visibly, but it also has to point out existing deficits.

Thesis: *“Peace Education Through Sport” is obliged to affect the outward domain in various forms and is asked to guarantee sustainability.*

Peace denotes a certain quality of life. Those, who are committed to peace education through sport should not be content with short-term success stories. The question of peace and the responsibility for peace is still a current issue of sport-ethics as well as of practical action.

And that brings me to the end of my presentation. Ladies and Gentlemen, to sum up, let me emphasize once more that “Peace Education Through Sport” is neither a pure vision, nor is it a pure banality. Peace education is seen as a challenge in a pluralistic world to the system of sport. Sport – we have to bare in mind – can only make a small contribution to maintain/sustain a pluralistic democracy. The appeal goes to all of us to support that kind of sport that helps to provide an opportunity to bridge ethnic divides, to promote social integrity and foster peace among people. In other words, it is so to say, up to us to give sport a chance

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SPORTS AND UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

Sports nowadays are considered to have a particular pedagogical value, and are regarded as “one of our society’s essential components,”¹ able to transmit “all the fundamental norms of social life.”² They are seen as bearers of fundamental educational values such as “tolerance, team spirit, loyalty.”³ This is greatly emphasized by the documents released for The International Year of Sport and Physical Education, sponsored by the United Nations.

However, it is well-known that even while sports may seem to solve some problems, they are not themselves exempt from them. They are at times carriers of dangerous and uncontrollable tendencies which pollute their very value: in the instance when a sport becomes an addictive habit, a show, at times causing violence and promoting doping. There is also the risk of accepting and even contributing towards the idolatry and commercialization of one’s own body.

Sport gives value to the body, an aspect which does not reduce it to a merely materialistic value. It should however be given the right place and be “used” appropriately in educating towards the development of one’s ego and a sense of the community.

The body is not an object but a subject, a person. “Man is not a fragment of corporeity,” wrote Cardinal Danneels of Brussels, “inhabited for an instant by a spiritual spark. He is above all a spirit, a free and unique person, and it is through the body that his spirit opens up to an experience in matter and history. The soul does not come to live in an already existing home, but it establishes its corporeity specifically through matter. In this way the human body

¹ www.eyes-2004.info

² Graf C., *Children’s Health International Trial (CHILT)*, Introduzione, Istituto Superiore di Educazione Fisica, Colonia, 2002, p. 1 e seg.

³ www.eyes-2004.info

becomes the exteriorization of the soul: a totally different thing from a dress which is simply put on.”⁴

Educating the body implies enabling corporeity to manifest and arouse the spirit. But when is a sport able to arouse the spirit? This happens when it is able to endow those who practice it with self-dominion, enabling them to master their whole being – which is always a goal to strive for – and fostering moral commitment in an athlete. This includes values such as loyalty, generosity, self-denial, solidarity, courage, discipline; a sense of responsibility, of fair-play, of aesthetics; an appreciation for nature, for life and spiritual values.

One might ask whether sports automatically helps in socialization, whether it contributes substantially towards the complete development of a person according to the methods used in practicing sports and the goals one intends to achieve.

“Like other activities, to practice a sport can take on many forms and can have a number of outcomes: it is a release of latent psychophysical energy, but also a type of idolatry with regard to prestige and money-making; it is the giving of self but can also foster egoism and oppression; it is a point for meeting others but also for confrontation.”⁵ Sports, even sports, express certain needs – love, freedom, creativity, autonomy, justice, happiness, and so on – which are at the very core of the human being.

A sport is, substantially, much more than mere amusement or a difficult task to perform before achieving victory. It is, in reality, a privileged space to get to know oneself and others, to live with others, and also to open up to a holistic vision of the person. However, it is not enough to know all this: it is necessary to bring this to a level of human and spiritual consciousness and work towards its realization. We need to recognize that few other human activities contain such richness as sports: a wealth of creativity, courage, solidarity, enthusiasm, strength, respect for rules and fellow athletes, social interaction, group work, a striving for quality, fun, friendship, joy of living and so on.⁶

The crises in sports today underscore the fact that educational activity cannot be limited to making players aware of abstract values and ethic principles. Evidently, neither a generic pan-sportive ideology, nor an increasingly undesirable facade of fair-play can ever reveal to a person, through sports, the meaning and ultimate goal of his or her very existence.

By focusing on the highest values of human existence, sports reveals the essential dimension of the person as a “finite” being (defeat, accidents, incapability of altruism or of accepting a negative outcome), as well as an “in-finite” being, capable of rising to the occasion to overcome one’s limits. It is not a question of adding new contents to sports, but of highlighting their importance and orienting them in the right direction.

Nor is it a matter of either condemning or running away from the contradictions of today’s sports world, from its desperate attempt to become all powerful and achieve immortality, from its slavery to money. The human being is made for competition, victory, defeat, and tends towards perfection while existing in an abyss of uncertainties; that is how he or she wants to be accepted, understood, and loved. To make oneself one with others is an ambitious challenge, accepting without reserve, not so much today’s sports with their negative aspects, as much as the person who practices them, contributing to silently and patiently instilling the seeds of something positive.

⁴ Danneels G., *Le stagioni della vita*, Queriniana, Brescia, 1998, p. 231.

⁵ Peri V., *Anno europeo 2004, educare attraverso lo sport*, in *Settimana* - 11 gennaio 2004/n.1, p. 9.

⁶ *Idem*, p. 9.

De Coubertin, the father of modern Olympics, attributed to sports the ability to introduce three new and vital qualities in world affairs: democracy, internationality, and pacifism⁷.

While the history of modern sports works to open horizons for the coming together of peoples in peace, one may ask whether the unity of the human family is a distant utopia. A watchful eye sees that our planet, in spite of thousands of contradictions, tends towards unity, a sign and need of our times. It seems to be a utopian project, but education, in this perspective, is a primary vehicle for achieving it.

When we believe in the relational dimension of humanity and generously invest in the qualities of the other person, our goal seems to be within reach. Through reciprocal love we experience a more authentic social harmony, a dynamic which brings together the efforts made to educate the individual person and those to build up a community. This vision is in agreement with current models of education aimed at building up communities, which underscore the need to combine individual and community building efforts. But that is not all. "The final goal of education (to develop the person, his or her autonomy) comes about, almost paradoxically, through a person's growth in relationship with others. The spiritual and educational process of establishing mutual love is the way that leads to the building of the 'utopia-reality' of unity."⁸

And the discipline of sports is a reliable and demanding way to test and experience our true ability and will to relate. "The first characteristic of the old as well as the new Olympic spirit is that of being a religion,"⁹ says De Coubertin. Sports cannot become the new planetary religion that unites the world, but it can reveal and regenerate irreplaceable resources for the building of a united world.

Let's then ask ourselves: Could universal brotherhood, instead of the clash of civilizations as so dangerously predicted by Samuel Huntington, be the way out of this state of terror and anxiety in which we live? What if brotherhood, instead of war, were synonymous with security and safety? And what if brotherhood, seen as the substance of relationships among individuals, groups, cultures and faiths, were to be the starting point and the way to coin the undeniable reality of interdependence in which we live?

Freud sustained that human beings have traded a bit of happiness in exchange for security. Faced with our growing need for security, what can the paradigm of brotherhood offer us?

According to the definition adopted by international organisms, security is the capacity to discern, avoid, or at least mitigate, a menacing threat. As we were reminded by the Nobel in Economics, Amartya Sen, security is also freedom to choose one's education, social and health services, and one's economic resources. And we would also add: freedom to express one's own corporeity and freedom to challenge oneself and others, challenges which are offered by motor activity and sports.

Security cannot be gained through military means, but rather through political programs which encourage and support human development. Security and development go hand in hand. They are in reciprocal relationship: the two terms either strength each other or cancel each other out. We need to break out of the cycle of terror and fear, to rebuild connections and relationships, giving life to social networks, an expression of a civil society composed of world

⁷ Lombardo A., *Pierre de Coubertin*, edizioni RAI - ERI, Roma, 2000, p. 189.

⁸ Lubich C., *Lezione per la laurea h.c. in Pedagogia*, in *Nuova Umanità*, XXIII (2001/3-4) 135 – 136, p. 351.

⁹ De Coubertin P., *L'idée olympique* (1935), Stuttgart 1967. Cit. in Brohm J.M. e Caillat M., *Le Dessous de l'olympisme*, Paris, 1984, p.146.

citizens that keep one eye on local affairs, and the other on global events. The risk of disengagement, of lack of responsibility, the demise of public consciousness, of increased fragmentation, is real. Seen from the point of view of human rights and the common good, they are not the by-products of a free market and free trade.

In the logic of universal brotherhood, the common good and human rights are instead the central and inspiring nucleus, the point of departure and the end goal of economic and social politics. The debate on these two different ways of viewing the common good and human rights is very much alive within international organizations.

Universal brotherhood, lived out in society and therefore also in sports, is flexibility juxtaposed to rigidity, it is inclusion rather than exclusion, dialogue rather than monologue, integration rather than independence. This logic promotes commitment and has no need for non-committal and passive behavior: it means assuming responsibility and avoiding superficial stances. In the complex interweaving of cultures and languages in today's world, which often cross and merge together, especially in urban centers, brotherhood does not require a direct translation of these languages but that we be familiar with the ways of other cultures. And we know how many opportunities sports can offer in this regard.

Brotherhood, therefore, calls for universal respect and egalitarian reciprocity. Brotherhood is another way to avoid falling back in our own worlds, closing ourselves off in our own national, cultural and religious identity. It opts for a movement towards universal respect and egalitarian reciprocity, which demands that we grow to the point of being able to establish a climate of dialogue and communion, in which diversity is not seen as threatening, but as a resource, where conflict is no longer a problem but an opportunity.

“Brotherhood can give new meaning today to the reality of interdependence,” wrote Chiara Lubich, President of the Focolare Movement from which New Humanity draws its life, during the first World Day for Interdependence held in Philadelphia in September 2003. “It can give rise to projects and actions in the complex political, economic, cultural and social fabric of our world.

“Brotherhood brings peoples out of their isolation and opens the door for development to those who are still excluded. Brotherhood shows the way to peacefully resolving differences and relegates war to history books. Brotherhood in action allows us to dream and even to hope for some kind of communion of goods between rich and poor nations, since the scandalous economic inequality in today's world is one of the main causes of terrorism. The profound need for peace expressed by today's humanity indicates that brotherhood is not only a value, not only a method, but a global paradigm for political development. This is why a world that is increasingly interdependent needs politicians, entrepreneurs, intellectuals and artists (and we would add people in the world of sports) who put brotherhood – a tool of unity – at the center of their actions and thoughts.”

Seen in this perspective, sports could play a major role in forming global citizens for today's world; citizens who would be cognizant of the reality of interdependence in which they live, with the civic virtues that make them capable of building a global society apt at limiting, on one hand, the extreme behaviour of religious and ethnic fanaticism, and on the other, that of uncontrolled capitalism. Sportmeet wants to bear witness to this, by encouraging, developing and spreading exemplary practices. Some of these will be proposed to you here today.

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SPORTMEET PROJECTS

Sportmeet's project is essentially a cultural one, but theory without practice would mean nothing. And so, open as it is towards building universal brotherhood in sport and through sport, Sportmeet has started projects which we would like to define as helpful sport, concrete actions to guarantee the right to do sport for those that are deprived of it, actions to promote a culture of sport directed to the construction of a united world, actions to help concretely sport projects in developing countries.

The first project was the one at the college of Fontem, a village in the forest of Camerun, where the Focolare Movement has been for quite some time. Presently there are 450 young people in this college, boys and girls of this region, who are at the secondary school. Presently there are two projects in Fontem: the building of a fully equipped sports center and the sports formation of the college students, also thanks to the presence of a qualified instructor, sent by Sportmeet for a certain period of time during the year.

Besides SportFontem, other smaller projects have been started and we are sure that these will develop in the near future.

One of these projects is a kind of an original "Adoption from a distance" - if we can call it so - of a whole football team. The youths of Villa Esperanza, a poor and difficult district on the outskirts of Bogotá in Columbia, where the suffering of youth delinquency is strongly felt, has benefited from this initiative. It was on the request of the father of one of these youths that it has been decided to help in the setting up of a regular football team. Adoption at a distance consisted in providing the team with football gears and balls donated by the Benevento team, who is in the third division of the Italian football teams. This was thanks to their director, who is one of the founders of Sportmeet. The presentation of the official gears of Benevento was held a few months ago in a very happy atmosphere.

Another project has been started in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The children of a village who have been adopted at a distance, have also received sports material and a football team has been set up for them.

Another project that we are trying to sustain is the one in favor of the school "Café' con leche" of the island of Santo Domingo. "El Café" is a very poor district on the outskirts of the capital city Santo Domingo. Here material poverty is accompanied by a very serious moral situation among youth. In fact, many of them are the victims of violence since childhood. Ten years ago, Marisol Jemenez, a young female student of pedagogy who is now a teacher, decided to dedicate herself personally to the people of this district. She started giving lessons to a small group of children during her free afternoons from university. Her first school was under a tree, then she moved to an old warehouse. Very soon the number of children increased and another two teachers offered their services for the afternoon lessons. Now there are about a hundred children. "Café' con leche" is the name given to the school of the district of El Café', because when Marisol saw that there was disagreement between the children of Santo Domingo, whose skin is a little lighter in color and those of Haiti who come from immigrants of a darker color, she brought about the comparison of coffee with milk. At times coffee with milk is light; other times it is dark, but it is always coffee.

The small dream of the children of “Cafè con leche” is to have a small playground where they can play football. Near the school there is a piece of land for sale which can be bought for 2,800 dollars, but as this piece of land is on a slope, a wall has to be constructed. Sportmeet has decided to make the dream of these children come true.

Another significant initiative is being carried out at Jardim Margarida, a poor district in the region of San Paulo in Brazil: The Project consists of 7 areas: School Reinforcement, Food Reinforcement, Education through Arts and Music, Building citizens, Computer courses, Scholarships, Sports in particular: table tennis, handball and capoeira.

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SPORTS4PEACE – YOUR POWER PLAY FOR PEACE

Since the fall of 2003 sport groups and school classes from all over Austria have been experiencing sports in a new dimension – as a 'playground' for society in peace and solidarity.

The significance of this project is reflected in life experiences: an example is the success story of the weakest volleyball player of the team, who learned how to serve the ball the last day of the tournament; another example is from a soccer team that was about to win and in the last round of the tournament offers its best player to the competing team that had an injured player. Two examples how sport moves - more than just balls.

A core piece of this project is an inflatable dice, the Sports4Peace dice. Alois Hechenberger, an expert in games and play leadership has created, with the help of young people, 6 rules for the game. These are reflected on the 6 squares of the cube. All of them embrace the golden rule for doing sports. This rule is a guiding principle to be found in all religious beliefs: „Whatever you expect to be done to yourself, you do to the other.“ (Christian faith, Lk 6,13) or 'Nobody is a true believer as long as he does not want the same for his brother as he desires for himself' (Islam, Hadit 13, al Bukhari).

The six rules are:

1. Play Hard - Do your best!
Commit yourself completely and with joy
2. Play Fair!
Be honest with yourself and the others
3. Hang In!
Don't give up, even when it is difficult
4. Take Care of! -
Respect everybody – everybody is important
5. Celebrate!
Enjoy the success of the other as much as your own
6. Make a Difference!
Big aims we can reach only together

The six rules join one thing to another. They illustrate individual moments in experiencing sports and play.

The Sports4Peace-Rules do not abolish the rules of a specific sport. More so, they support their basic principles.

The rules do not hinder competition. Instead, they invite everyone to give the best and at the same time respect the other – regardless if the other is a team member or a competitor.

The realization of Sports4Peace-Rules influence the development of personalities in a positive way. They encourage an active and committed lifestyle.

Everyone participating in Sports4Peace projects pays attention to the following components:

1. The Sports4Peace dice decides:

The competing teams throw the dice before they start. The Sports4Peace-Rule showing on the dice becomes the 'motto' of the game.

Accept the Golden Rule as the principle of all Sports4Peace-Rules.

2. Time-Out for Golden Rings:

A Golden Ring is an action as defined by the Sports4Peace-Rules. Think how many Golden Rings you have gathered and how many you observed being met by someone else.

3. Leave a Mark:

Build a network of peace across the world through the Internet. By publishing the Golden Rings on the Internet, the little actions for peace and brotherly (sisterly) love become visible. With 51.000 Golden Rings the 510 km² circumference of the earth will be closed symbolically by this network of peace.

This year the UN Commissioner Adolf Ogi and famous athletes like Hermann Mayer, Michael Walchhofer, Stefano Baldini, Gianni Rivera, Ralf Schuhmacher and the handicapped athlete Thomas Geierspichler are patrons of S4P. Well known educationalists like Univ. Prof. Kleiner from Vienna or Bill Michaelis from San Francisco State University support Sports4Peace by underlining the pedagogical values of this initiative.

Hundreds of school classes or approximately 20.000 young people have been touched in some way by this initiative. Other Sports4Peace activities get on its way as actions for solidarity, like the Sports4Peace-Race in Bad Ischl. For each kilometer run in the race a school project for children in Iraq is being sponsored.

It would be beyond the scope of this presentation if we presented all the wonderful and encouraging results of the initiative. A comment in a letter from a teacher who got involved in a Sports4Peace initiative with her students should stand for the numerous feedback: 'Considering that students used to get teachers and each other hospitalized, used to destroy school property and even were threatening each other with sissors, Now, I can not relate to this any more! They have changed, they have learned, Thank you!

We have received echos from Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, Poland and Great Britain. They have ordered the Sports4Peace dice and now participate in this initiative.

The mayor of Turin has recently shown interest in the Sports4Peace project. In preparation for the winter Olympic games from September until the games will start he would like to see the schools of Turin get involved in this initiative. Only in this way, he believes, the Olympic spirit can unfold in his city. Soon we will start a S4P-Project as an 'Anti-Camorra' initiative in affected districts of the city of Neaples.

In the meantime we have not only created the S4P dice and a trailer promoting the project but also an educational brochure containing background information. This brochure has been published for teachers and trainers in three languages (German, English and Italian). Now we have started to work on a French, a Spanish, a Polish, a Belo-Russian and Russian version.

The S4P brochure states: „Our goal: A world, in which people recognize each other as sisters and brothers . Our dream: You and the three billion people watching the Olympic games on TV will commit themselves to strive for this goal'. (Young) people wonder: 'Perhaps this is not just a dream?'

We will conclude this presentation with a clip from the Sports4Peace-Trailer, which we had done with some young people. This way we aspire that we can share with you the spirit and the enthusiasm of the young people for Sports4Peace.

Movement Teens for Unity

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We are young people of the Focolare Movement, boys and girls who want to live for a united world. We are of different religious beliefs, of different cultural backgrounds, but we have one common goal: to create one family of humanity, to realize the universal brotherhood and to involve many young people from all over the world in this project .

To reach that goal we take different paths, one of that is sports as an instrument of unity among individuals and peoples.

In 2002, during our international meeting in Rome with more than 10.000 young people of 93 countries we renewed our commitment - to live by the so called Golden Rule: „*Whatever you expect to be done to yourself, you do to the other*”. This Golden Rule can be found as guiding principle in all big religions.

It is a rule that can be applied even in sports: So we try to do sports in a competitive way, but without rivalry. Also we need to eliminate every form of violence on the playground and tracks; we must give our best, moment by moment. We have to be honest towards team-mates and competitors which goes as far as celebrating the victory of the competitor. We do sports to build real and new friendships.

So sports becomes a way to overcome diversities that may divide us. For example Christians, Muslims and Buddhists promised during the opening ceremony of a sport meeting in Thailand that was organized by the Teens for Unity to follow above all the Golden Rule. In Bangkok 300 athletes, referees and spectators assembled for ‘Mini-Olympic Games’. Their goal was trying to live universal brotherhood. At the end everybody felt victorious.

The Golden Rule applied to sports changes even the way different teams compete. Everybody involved participates to realize universal brotherhood.

“For me it was not important to win a prize”, said one of the winners of the Olympics of the Teens for Unity in Brazil, “what was important was to experience friendship among all of us. I learned that even with little gestures, like a handshake with the competing team, we can build the united world.”

In the Olympics mentioned above 400 young people were engaged in different tournaments of different disciplines: athletics, volleyball, football and in a very challenging chess play for 3 days.

The Olympics were opened with the Brazilian Hymn, the Olympic Oath and the lightening of Olympic Fire. The teams consisted of young people that did not know each other before: doing sports in a new way was the reason to get to know each other and to forget prejudices between different cities. "I thought that in sports it is not possible to respect the others", said a girl at the end, "because in sports you have to compete. But here I learned not to exclude anybody."

In Holland Teens invited about 50 young people with behavioural problems to participate in a sports tournament. The organizing team was told that they would need special coaching for these people. As the tournament started it turned out that these young people were perfectly integrated in the teams right from the beginning. All of the participants appreciated the story of an athlete that had participated at the Para Olympics. He stressed that the real victory in life is that one over oneself.

"Deport-chicos" is the title that young people of Argentine chose for their yearly organized tournament in Buenos Aires. Last time more than 800 young people participated. At 12 everybody stopped the activities. A break for a "time out for peace" - a moment of silence or prayers for peace, that we are engaged to attend not only during sports activities but every day all over the world. Deport-chicos is doing sports, but not only. Every participant is invited to bring things, cloths, money. All of these things are distributed among the poorest of the city. Last time even young orphans participated in this activity. Many ties of lasting friendship were knit.

Our next goal is a relay race for universal brotherhood and peace.

On October 9th there will be a race in thousands cities of different countries all over the world. Young people on the Fiji Islands and the Pacific Isles will start. We will hand over the baton that day symbolically from one time zone to the next , We will pass through many important places like Jerusalem or Kinshasa, through the Seat of the UN in New York to the borders of countries in war. People will participate in this using their bikes, canoes, skates and so on. We will send an hourly update of the event to the media.

To participate in the race people may give an entrance fee to support the 30 "Projects of Giving" which are active in all over the world. The money raised will be used for schools in countries at war. The food, school material and other things which are donated will be given to the poor people in our towns.

We will call our global relay "Run4unity" - "Rainbow over the world". This is to build a rainbow of peace through all our sports tournaments around the world.