



# OLYMPIC SOLIDARITY AND NOC SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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# GETTING READY FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES PARIS 2024

We are delighted to present the Olympic Solidarity and NOC Services Annual Report for 2023. With just one year to go until the Olympic Games Paris 2024, this past year was crucial for final preparations, which perfectly encapsulated our theme: “Getting Ready for the Olympic Games Paris 2024”. It was a pivotal period for athletes, coaches, referees, International Federations and, of course, the NOCs, us and our colleagues at the IOC. Notable milestones included holding the Chefs de Mission seminar in Paris in July 2023 and concluding the Games preparation forums, with continental forums for the Americas and Oceania wrapping up the series that started in 2022.

There was also the final stretch of preparation for those involved in the Winter Youth Olympic Games Gangwon 2024. The team worked hand in hand with the YOGOC to brief the 78 participating NOCs at the Chefs de Mission seminar held online. Olympic Solidarity’s Youth Athlete Development Programme played a crucial role in equipping young athletes with tailored training opportunities provided by IFs in partnership with Olympic Solidarity. You can find an example of this on page 4.

While athletes’ preparation generally draws the most attention, we all know that enabling an athlete to reach their full potential takes so much more than good training sessions. This report highlights the holistic approach required for success. Beyond rigorous training, athletes thrive thanks to the support systems around them. We delve into how Olympic Solidarity and NOC Services enhance coach training, bolster NOC resilience, and elevate grassroots sport and promotion of the Olympic values.

We are confident that at Paris 2024 – the first Olympic Games to feature full gender parity and fully embrace Olympic Agenda 2020 – NOCs and their athletes will embody these ideals. We look forward to crossing that finish line together.



“With the Olympic Games Paris 2024, we can truly look forward to the advent of a new era of Olympic Games. These Games will be more inclusive, younger, more urban and more sustainable. They will be the very first Olympic Games held with perfect gender parity. In this and many other ways, we can expect Olympic Games that conform to our Olympic Agenda from start to finish.”

Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee



“Through targeted programmes and initiatives, we are working towards creating a more inclusive and equitable sporting landscape.”

Robin Mitchell, Chair of the Olympic Solidarity Commission



# UNIVERSALITY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES



Olympic scholarship-holders for Paris 2024 Marileidy Paulino (DOM) winning gold and Sada Williams (BAR) bronze in the 400m at the World Athletics Championships 2023 in Budapest (HUN).

## Olympic Games Paris 2024

### Olympic Scholarships for Athletes

By the end of 2023, the last year of preparations before the Olympic Games Paris 2024, the number of athletes supported by an individual Olympic Scholarship had grown from 1,146 to 1,260. These athletes represent 154 NOCs, while an additional 36 NOCs with large delegations (50+ athletes at Tokyo 2020 Games) are benefitting from a tailor-made option.

### Team Support Grant

On the road to Paris 2024, 206 Olympic summer sports teams – 112 women's and 94 men's teams – from 135 NOCs benefitted from the Olympic Solidarity Team Support Grant programme in 2023.

### Athletes Games Services

In the final year of preparations for the Olympic Games Paris 2024, Athletes Games Services pursued its close cooperation with the OCOG to ensure that operational plans meet the requirements of NOCs and their athletes. Moreover, the NOC Relations Department, in close collaboration with Olympic Solidarity, Paris 2024 and the Continental Associations, conducted Games Preparation Forums for the NOCs across the world. This series of forums, which started in 2022 and wrapped up in 2023, provided NOCs with better insight into IOC and Paris 2024 services and policies, offering more detailed explanations and greater opportunities for back-and-forth interactions.



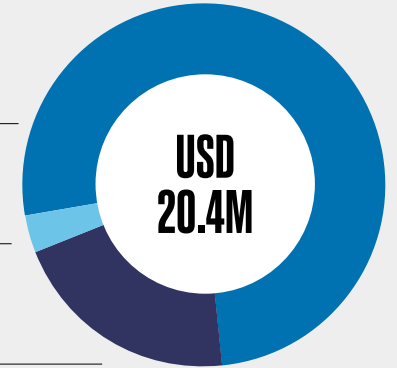
## OLYMPIC SOLIDARITY OLYMPIC GAMES UNIVERSALITY PROGRAMMES

Paris 2024 + Milano Cortina 2026

Olympic Scholarships for Athletes – Paris 2024 **15.5M**

Olympic Scholarships for Athletes – Milano Cortina 2026 **0.7M**

Team Support Grant Paris 2024 and Milano Cortina 2026 **4.2M**



## OLYMPIC SOLIDARITY TEAM SUPPORT GRANTS (TSG)

Paris 2024 + Milano Cortina 2026



**123** Women's teams

**98** Men's teams

**2** Mixed teams (curling)

**141**

NOCs benefitting from this programme



## Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026

### Olympic Scholarships for Athletes

2023 was the year of the launch of the scholarships for the next Olympic Winter Games, Milano Cortina 2026. In this first year of this programme, Olympic Solidarity awarded 197 individual scholarships to athletes from 39 NOCs. A further six NOCs, those with the largest delegations at the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, were receiving a tailor-made option.

### Team Support Grant

Just like for Paris 2024, Olympic Solidarity is also offering support to teams on the road to Milano Cortina 2026. In 2023, it supported 11 women's teams, 4 men's teams and two mixed teams, totalling 17 teams from 14 NOCs.

“We want to give all our athletes a chance. Through various approaches, we want to provide support and make sure that female teams and athletes can also develop further. We are very grateful for the Team Support Grant, which have contributed to the success of our women's basketball team, the Belgian Cats.”

← Olympic scholarship-holder for PyeongChang 2018 and Beijing 2022 Morisi Kvitelashvili (GEO) during the Figure Skating Gala Exhibition at the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022.

High Performance Director Sven Van Camp,  
NOC of Belgium

# Julyana Al Sadeq: in her hijab, proudly fighting to inspire athletes and fans worldwide

A trailblazer and inspiration for people from near and far

Some athletes shy away from being a role model. Julyana Al Sadeq embraces the notion of being an inspiration to Arab and Muslim girls and women. And beyond. “I believe my story can inspire athletes and Olympic fans worldwide,” she says.

An Olympic Solidarity scholarship-holder for Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024, Al Sadeq has already written herself into history: flag-bearer for the Jordanian team at the 2020 Tokyo Games and breaker of stereotypes. A taekwondo athlete, she fights in a hijab. “Yes, for sure, I am proud to be an Arab athlete with a hijab,” she says. “Our community, they sometimes think the girls can’t compete in a sport like this. I really face those thoughts from people in our community and prove to them that we can, we can stand at the top of the world. “Everyone in Jordan asks me about this: you compete in a hijab? It [is] my identity. I am so proud and happy to be at the top of the world in my hijab.” In Jordan, the Al Sadeq family and taekwondo are synonymous. Julyana, like her brothers, has been coached by their father, Fuad. Older brother Yazan was a bronze medallist at the

2010 Youth Olympic Games in Singapore. Younger brother Anas competed at last year’s world championships. “Proud sister,” she says.

Julyana thought she was bound for Rio 2016. But she did not qualify. She reset, then came back to taekwondo. During those pre-Tokyo years, she says, even then having an Olympic Solidarity scholarship made a huge difference: “I have always dreamed of competing on the Olympic stage. When I discovered the Olympic Solidarity programme, I knew it was a perfect opportunity to turn that dream into a reality. This programme is a game-changer for me, providing financial support. It has allowed me to focus on my training without the added stress of financial burdens. It has greatly enhanced my skills and performance to be stronger and more confident, to be more determined and more disciplined in the sport.” At Tokyo, she went out in the first round. Not what she had hoped for. Looking back, she says now, “I’m glad for the experience itself.” Since, she has been at or near the top of the world. In December 2022, after her victory

at the Saudi Grand Prix, she became the first Jordanian and Arab woman to top the World Taekwondo rankings. Heading to Paris, she ranks number two, a silver medallist at the 2023 World Championships in the women’s 67-kilogram class.

To be an Olympic scholarship-holder still – now, amid years of sustained success, heading toward her second Games – holds a different but special meaning, she says: “I’ve been a passionate athlete and I want to compete, and I want to be on top of the world... it has added a lot for me. Every equipment I want to buy, I don’t think about it – I buy!”

In Paris, she will have qualified as one of the top athletes in the world: “I worked hard to achieve that goal.” She knows she will be in the spotlight. She welcomes it:

↓ Jordan’s Julyana Al Sadeq, one of the world’s top taekwondists.

“It’s an honour for me to be recognised for challenging gender norms in combat sports.” Paris will also offer Julyana Al Sadeq the chance to give back to those who believed in her all along, like Olympic Solidarity. “I really feel like they believed in me – so I should believe in myself. So I want to compete and prove to them, and to myself, prove to the world I deserve that programme, and everything they give me.”

**“When I discovered the Olympic Solidarity programme, I knew it was a perfect opportunity to turn that dream into a reality. This programme is a game changer for me.”**

Julyana Al Sadeq, Jordan, Taekwondo



# Hugues Fabrice Zango: Inspiring Africa to dream one hop, step, jump at a time

Burkina Faso triple jumper hopes personal victories will set example for others to follow

After becoming both a doctor and a world champion in 2023, the obvious question for triple jump sensation Hugues Fabrice Zango is: What does he do for an encore? The Olympic Solidarity scholarship-holder from Burkina Faso earned his Ph.D. in electrical engineering from France's Université de Reims, and topped the podium at the 2023 World Athletics Championships in Budapest in what he will always fondly look back on as a golden year.

Zango's sights are now firmly set on Paris 2024 and upgrading the bronze medal he won at Tokyo 2020, his country's only Olympic medal to date. But Zango's aspirations, like the man himself, are multi-faceted and extend far beyond the French capital. "I know that people in Africa follow my actions, and I'm fighting to represent the living dream of young Africans who have a similar background to mine," Zango says. "I've already achieved one of my biggest goals: convincing the people of Burkina Faso that even people from our country have the right to dream of medals at the world's toughest competitions.

"My aim is to stay at the top level long enough for this to stay etched in their minds forever." He is certainly well on his way. Prior to clinching gold at the World Athletics Championships (also a first for a Burkinabé), Zango had already compiled an impressive list of sporting accomplishments, including a world championship bronze in 2019 and silver in 2021. He is also the current world indoor record-holder, a title he claimed in 2021 with a jump of 18.07 meters.

Zango credits the scholarship funding he has received as being the catalyst for his successes, both on and off the field of play. "For countries like Burkina Faso, where public support for sport is still very limited, Olympic Solidarity scholarships allow us to dream big and for such dreams to come true," he says. "Among other things, it has enabled me to travel to top-level training centres in Reims and Paris. Thanks to the fact that I was able to train there, my level has soared and I'm now one of the best in the world." "Without this scholarship, it's obviously hard to take the risks... necessary to achieve our goals."



Hugues Fabrice Zango of Burkina Faso, the Olympic ideal: world champion triple jumper, aiming for Paris 2024 gold and, now, a Ph.D. in electrical engineering.

The funding also gave Zango the courage to reach out to one of his idols, renowned triple-jumper-turned-coach Teddy Tamgho, who has been instrumental in his protégé's rise in the sport the last few years. Tamgho, who held the indoor triple jump record (17.92m) from 2011 before Zango broke it in 2021, saw immediate potential in his young understudy, inviting him to train in Paris while studying for his doctorate in Northern France. A gruelling schedule to be sure, but an opportunity that Zango was only too happy to accept. "Getting this money gave me more confidence to take more risks. It really gave me the intention to start everything. To go to ask [Teddy]. Because I had a budget."

Tamgho's tutelage has clearly paid dividends. Zango will head to Paris 2024 as the favourite in his discipline, ahead of fierce

rivals Lázaro Martínez of Cuba and Andy Díaz Hernández of Italy. As Zango's list of new prefixes (Dr, world champion, Olympic medallist) continues to grow, could another – that of Olympic champion – be next?

Earning gold at Paris 2024 would unquestionably be the crowning achievement in his sporting career, but in typical Zango fashion, it's the effect such a victory could have that is clearly fuelling his Olympic ambitions. "I want to show the world that anyone, especially Africans, can achieve their full potential when provided with the necessary infrastructure and support," he says. "And I want my continued success to be used to encourage public policy-makers across Africa to invest in the necessary infrastructure to produce champions locally." Spoken, as always, like a true champion.

# Cool Cats: investing in Belgium's "super special" women's basketball team

When optimised support leads to outstanding results

Belgium's women's national basketball team has a cool name. They're the Belgian Cats. In 2023, the Belgian Cats – for the very first time in the tournament's history, which dates to 1938 – won the women's EuroBasket title, beating Spain, 64-58, in the championship game. The Belgian Cats, who made a first Olympic appearance in Tokyo, finishing seventh, have far bigger goals. But that's maybe getting ahead of the story. Because the story is about how a team that historically enjoyed little success is now getting it done, and how Olympic Solidarity Team Support Grants – with an added emphasis on female athletes – can help play a key role for smaller NOCs.

Belgium is one of Europe's smaller countries. At Tokyo 2020, the NOC sent 123 athletes: 89 were individual athletes and 34 in team sports. Traditionally, men's teams have been better funded than women's, not just in Belgium but around the world. For Olympic Solidarity, a special focus leading into the Paris 2024 Games has been on gender equity. Reflecting this focus, a change in the guidelines for the 2021-24 cycle, for the first time, now allows

and encourages an NOC to divide funds between men's and a women's teams. Consider the following: Over the 2017-21 Olympic Solidarity Plan, the Team Support Grants programme worked like this:

Total allocated budget about USD 9.62 million: Men's teams 104, Women's 95 (47% of the budget), plus two mixed teams.

Now, the difference for the 2021-24 cycle. Allocated budget roughly USD 13 million: Men's teams 100, Women's 126, that is USD 6.61 million, 55.2% of the total budget and a 50% increase over the previous cycle.

Consider the way the Belgian Olympic Committee spent in the years 2017-21 and 2021-24. Then: USD 100,000 to the men's hockey team. Understandable. Belgium had taken bronze at the 1920 Antwerp Games, in Belgium. Then a long drought. At Rio 2016, the men's team took silver. Then first at the 2018 Hockey World Cup. First at the 2019 European Championships. Then, in Tokyo – gold. The Belgian Cats, too, have had an intriguing trajectory.

That's why USD 100,000 for this four-year period have been allocated to them. The team is built around one of the world's best, Emma Meesseman, the 1.95 m centre from Ypres, a champion now in WNBA as well as European club and national team play. It was obvious when she was leading Belgium's girls in age-group play that destiny might be calling.

A change in the programme policy that affirms spending on women's teams just like the men's means that, for the Belgian Cats, the time is now. Dating back to 1950, the Cats have played in the European Championships 14 times. In 2017 and 2021, third place; 2023, winners. At the 2022 FIBA World Cup, fifth. Jean-Michel Saive, President of the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee, said, "The COIB strives to support all our Team Belgium teams and to be an example in promoting gender equality. We want to give all our athletes a chance. Through various approaches, we want to provide support and make sure that female teams and athletes can also develop further. We are

very grateful for the Team Support Grant, which has contributed to the success of our women's basketball team, the Belgian Cats." High Performance Director Sven Van Camp echoed: "We saw in age-group there was talent. We said, 'Let's go all out.'" Saive added, "Within our NOC, we have set up a National Action Plan and a Gender Equality Commission, in collaboration with the European Olympic Committees and the GAMES project, with the aim of promoting gender equality in sport and encouraging women's participation in sport."

In a Paris qualifier, the Cats defeated Senegal to secure a Games slot – just days after losing, at the buzzer, to the USA, the seven-time Olympic champions, Breanna Stewart tipping in a rebound for an 81-79 American victory. On hand for the US game, played in Antwerp: a crowd of 13,700, a record for a women's sports event in Belgium. "For such a little country, it's super special to do this with this group," Belgium's Antonia Delaere said after the game. "And I think we can still evolve. I think we can dream big for Paris."



← Qualifying for Tokyo 2020 was a first step for the Belgian Cats, Belgium's women's basketball team. Since, investing in the team has paid off with big wins, the Cats primed for Paris 2024.



# A new lens on the Games: how an athlete becomes a (well-informed) Chef de Mission

From achievements on the track to success  
behind the scenes

Anna Meares has been an Olympic athlete in track cycling (two gold medals, one silver, three bronze). At Rio 2016, she was the flag-bearer for the Australian team at the Opening Ceremony. As Australia's Chef de Mission for Paris 2024, she now has an entirely new lens on the Olympics – in measure because of one of the most fundamental steppingstones on the pathway to any Games, the seminar for team leaders like her from around the world about a year ahead of Opening Ceremony. “I had no idea all this happened behind the scenes,” Meares said. “No idea to what level.” It is said the Olympic Games are the most complex event that happens in peacetime.

This is the raison d'être of the Chef de Mission seminar and forums – to make sure leaders of more than 200 NOC delegations at the Games are as informed as can be. A problem that might come up? Now, Meares said, she knows “who to escalate it to”. Typically, there are two sets of these kinds of meetings, continental and worldwide. For those in, say, the Americas, the continental get-together – the Olympic

Solidarity-IOC NOC Games Preparation Forum for America – took place in Houston in February 2023. Then everyone reconvened in Paris, in the summer, for the Chefs de Mission seminar, run by the Paris 2024 Organising Committee.

Big picture, the IOC seeks at these meetings to ensure that the Chefs understand not only the concept of the Games – “information overload”, Meares said, “very immersive, very insightful” – but changes in comparison to past editions. It also offers the chance to tour the venues. And, in Paris, to see how to get there via the metro – a preview of how many will indeed get around during the 2024 Games. Under the New Norm, the IOC is moving away from dedicated transport systems, turning instead as much as possible to public transport, seeking to make the Games more sustainable and less expensive for host cities. Wherever needed, for example to bring the athletes from the Olympic Village to the competition venues, dedicated transport is still being used. Critically, it also offers a forum for the Chefs to raise



With other chefs de mission and IOC staff: Australia's Anna Meares, front row, seated, third from right: 'I had so many curiosities and questions.'



For chefs de mission, the year-ahead session in a Games city is not just for learning about places, policies and procedures – but, too, a chance to raise concerns with one voice.

concerns, and with one voice. Meares said, “The wheel of time moves so quickly around information and topics and position. It's really good to have had that information with the Paris Organising Committee leads and with the IOC.”

It also offers relationship building. It not only helps a new Chef de Mission like Anna Meares learn about differences and challenges by exchanging with other Chefs de Mission. It also enables IOC Athletes Games Services to better prepare a range of stakeholders: the Organising Committee, NOCs, Chefs de Mission. “I was very much the rookie in the room,” Meares said. “A great space to be, with experienced Chefs. I'll be honest, there was a part of me that said, ‘What have I gotten myself into?’ But at the same time, it's just in my nature to love a challenge, and I love learning. And it just provided a platform where I had so many curiosities and questions that hit a peak that I think started my position in this role really positively.”

**“The wheel of time moves so quickly around information and topics and position. It's really good to have had that information with the Paris Organising Committee leads and with the IOC.”**

Anna Meares, Australia, Olympic Champion, Track Cycling and Australia's Chef de Mission for Paris 2024



# ATHLETES AND ENTOURAGE

## Athlete Career Transition (ACT)

Olympic Solidarity's Athlete Career Transition programme (ACT) provides NOCs with technical and financial assistance to support athletes, specifically Olympians, as they look to ensure a successful life outside competition – for instance, by pursuing an individual education project or taking the Athlete365 Business Accelerator course on entrepreneurship. Athletes from 64 NOCs benefitted from the programme in 2023.

## NOC Athletes' Commission Activity Grant

The NOC Athletes' Commission Activity Grant empowers athletes while contributing to the growth of an effective global athlete representation network. NOCs can use the grant to fund activities proposed by existing NOC athletes' commissions, or to support the creation of a new athletes' commission – which is less common, as 190 NOCs now have an athletes' commission of their own. In 2023, this grant was requested by 103 NOCs.

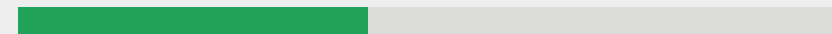
↓ At World Skate's high-performance camp, coaches from the Women in Sport High (WISH) Performance Pathway took literally center stage – Lea Schairer from Germany, left, and Ewa Niedzielska, center.



## FEMALE COACHES INITIATIVES



**42%** of NOCs have initiatives in place to increase the number of **high-performance** female coaches in sport



**48%** of NOCs have put in place coaching **career transition programmes** for female athletes

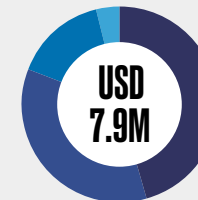


**67%** of NOCs have support networks or programmes for **high-performance female coaches**



## ENTOURAGE PROGRAMMES

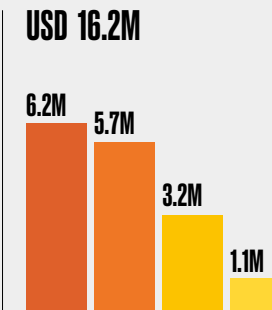
- **USD 3.6M** Technical Courses for Coaches
- **USD 2.8M** Olympic Scholarships for Coaches
- **USD 1.2M** NOC Athletes' Commission Activity Grant
- **USD 0.3M** Athlete Career Transition



## SPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES



- Continental Athlete Support Grant
- Youth Athlete Development
- Development of National Sports System
- Refugee Athlete Support for Paris 2024



## Technical Courses for Coaches

This programme, which offers active NF-recognised coaches the opportunity to attend courses in general or in technical fields such as training planning, physical conditioning, mental preparation and nutrition, offered a total of 285 courses in 2023, benefitting more than 5,900 coaches, including more than 1,500 female coaches, from 133 NOCs.

## Olympic Scholarships for Coaches

This programme targeted at NF-recognised coaches covers continuous training in sports sciences, sport-specific training or tailor-made training at a high-level training centre, university or IF-run centre. In 2023, Olympic Solidarity awarded 393 scholarships to coaches from 140 NOCs.

↓ Preliminary Round Match #22 of the Ice Hockey 3-on-3 Women's Mixed NOC – Winter Youth Olympic Games Lausanne 2020.



Olympic Solidarity Technical Course for Volleyball Coaches, 1–5 March 2023, Tehran (IRI). © Courtesy NOC Iran.

## Development of National Sports System

This programme helps NOCs to develop and strengthen their basic coaching structures and related sports systems by putting in place a medium-term or long-term action plan for one or more Olympic sports. In 2023, 92 projects from 70 NOCs were supported.

## Youth Athlete Development

2023 was also a crucial year for final preparations for the Youth Olympic Winter Games Gangwon 2024. NOCs took the opportunity of the three options offered by the Youth Athlete Development programme to support their young athletes in the final stretch of their preparations:

- Support for the identification and training of young athletes, an option sought by 81 NOCs for a total of 83 projects in 2023.
- Support for athletes aiming to participate in qualification events for the Summer and Winter Youth Olympic Games (YOG). For the 2021–2023 period, this option was selected by 43 NOCs – primarily for the Winter YOG Gangwon 2024.
- Training opportunities for young athletes offered by IFs. In 2023, 122 NOCs enjoyed this support offered by 21 IFs.

## Continental Athlete Support Grant

This grant helps NOCs to train their continental-level athletes for world, continental and regional multi-sports games, and eventually the Olympic Games. By the end of 2023, 161 NOCs had benefitted from this programme.

# Minding the gap: a skateboard camp at a famed California site to advance female coaches

Fostering gender parity on and off the field of play

It is indisputable: significant steps have been taken toward parity for women on the field of play at the Olympic Games. At Tokyo 2020, 48 per cent of the athletes were women. In Paris, the ratio is expected to be 50-50 – equality in numbers 128 years after the modern Olympic Games came to be.

Parity in coaching numbers lags behind. Thus, an initiative like the two-week November 2023 skateboard camp at the famed Woodward West facility in Tehachapi, California – a project seeking to fill that gap. “We did a great job. From nothing, something,” said one of the coaches in the programme, Ewa Niedzielska, manager of Italy’s Street national team. She added, “I couldn’t do it alone. It’s always better if you have help. Like, your sisters helping you.” The camp brought in 15 athletes from 13 nations. Some had significant skate experience. Others, not so much. Most of the young people came from developing nations. They were part of the Olympic Solidarity Youth Athlete Development, or YAD, programme, aiming to assist athletes and

“They saw that girls can do it.”

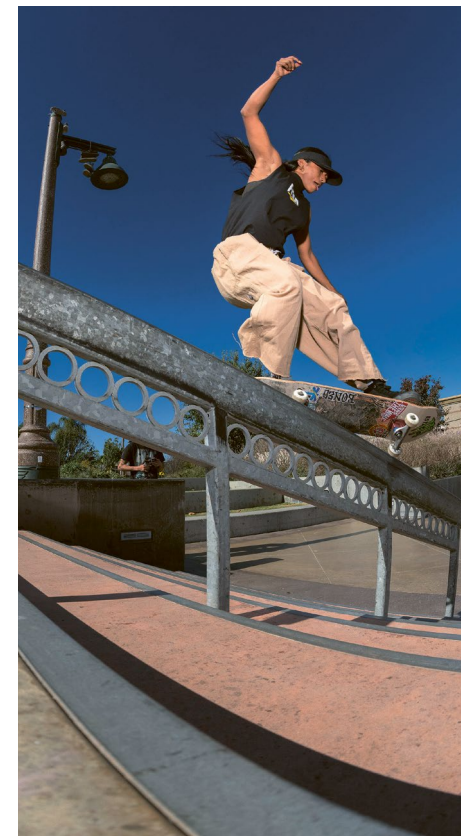
Ewa Niedzielska, Italy’s Street national team coach and WISH graduate

their coaches to identify the gaps in where they are and where they want to be, and to establish a map in coordination with their NOCs and NFs to bridge it. One of the key components: strengthening the skill set of the coaches with world-class support.

It’s well known it can be difficult to gain entry to the USA. Here, the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee made sure it was no problem. Delise O’Mealley, the USOPC official who led the effort to get the government to issue visas, called it simply an “act of service” and “central to our partnership with the international sport community”. Key background: Olympic Solidarity, in cooperation with the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations and Association of International Olympic

Winter Sports Federations and a number of IFs, launched what is known as the WISH programme – the Women in Sport High-Performance Coach Pathway. WISH, among other things, runs back to Recommendation 6 of the IOC’s 2018 Gender Equality Review Project. That calls for a balance in gender representation in coaches at the Olympic Games. WISH aims to equip about 100 women to coach at the elite level. World Skate nominated four for WISH – Ewa Niedzielska, Daniela Suarez of Argentina, Lea Schairer of Germany and Melissa Williams of South Africa. At Woodward West, World Skate had big ambitions, because the camp was set to operate on multiple layers: to make skateboarders and skateboarding better through cooperation between national federations and their NOCs plus connections between two Olympic Solidarity programmes: the Youth Athlete Development programme and the Olympic Scholarship for Coaches, and WISH.

The days were packed, morning to night, with skating, more skating and more skating still. All the same, the four coaches took the opportunity to add an informal one-hour girls-only session each day – so the girl skaters in particular could talk about, well, anything. “I got more patient,” Schairer said, adding a moment later, “There were people whose language we didn’t speak; they didn’t speak English. Still, you were able to coach nonetheless.” “We were able to adapt in the moment,” working through different cultures, Williams said. “It was a small miracle,” she added. “That speaks to everyone wanting the best, for themselves and each other.” Niedzielska said, and this is the ultimate truth, about girl skaters and female coaches: “For us, and for the kids, they saw they could do this. Because they saw us doing it. “They saw that girls can do it.”



Top: Jazmín Álvarez of Colombia, who joined the World Skateboarding Tour as part of the IOC’s Youth Athlete Development Programme, showing off a sample of what are called ‘street’ skills. Bottom: Amelia Bródka, who competed for Poland at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics in skateboarding’s ‘park’ event, tells the young athletes: ‘You are in control of your mindset.’

# Vital, everyday change people can see and feel: impact of regional Games in the Solomons

A true example of a sports event lasting legacy

When multisport Games come to one of the remote nations in the Pacific, it isn't just sport. It's a game-changer. "Unfortunately," said Fiji's Cathy Wong, a member of the ONOC Medical Commission, "government does not give money to sport in most countries." In that part of our world, budgets are too stretched. Governments just – can't. So, she added, "We said – how can sport help government?"

The 17th edition of the Pacific Games, held in the Solomon Islands in November and early December 2023, makes the point, emphatically. And that point, in a word, is – legacy. Supported by Olympic Solidarity's World Programmes, in coordination with the Oceania Continental Programmes, training sessions set up for those Games would not only train a new generation of first responders and medical personnel



The Pacific Games helped usher in a defined legacy for the Solomon Islands: heightened public health, sparked by sports-specific medical training – even for routine injuries – keyed to ONOC medical commission planning.

**“To have high performance, you have to have high-performance support systems.”**

Cathy Wong, Fiji, member of the ONOC Medical Commission

but also produce a first-for-the-Solomons mobile app that collects and shares medical-incident data. As well, ongoing access for everyday-use 14 defibrillators (AED) and 20 Basic Life Support bags (BLS), equipment bought for Games venues that, afterwards, was donated to sites such as the National Referral Hospital.

The Solomons, northeast of Australia, are an archipelago of six major islands and some 900 smaller ones. Total population: 734,000. Roughly two-thirds under age 34. The capital, Honiara, is on the largest island, Guadalcanal. About 150,000 people live in and around Honiara.

In many parts of the world, a BLS bag is ordinary. It might include, for example, bandages, medications, tape, trauma shears, a stethoscope, diagnostic instruments and more. In the Solomons, a BLS bag is not something you commonly saw before the Pacific Games, said Samoa's Dr. Belladonna Potoi, another member of the ONOC Medical Commission. During the Pacific Games, one of the defibrillators was put to use. A journalist from Fiji collapsed at the rugby stadium. A staffer who had

been specifically trained for these Games knew what to do: "I activated my training," he would tell officials, resuscitating the journalist, who was taken to the hospital. Potoi said a moment later, "I said to my team if nothing else happens, I'm happy. That's a success story." The start of that sloganeering can be traced to 2018, the year before the Pacific Games in Samoa – and even to 2015, to the Games that year in Papua New Guinea. There, Potoi said, recalling the year-ahead meeting in preparation for the Samoa edition, the look-back to Papua New Guinea saw "gaps" – training for first responders, and an overall coordination of resources so that all the athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers can have access to first aid if needed.

In Samoa, she said, sports and government officials, working together, created for 2019 a first-in-the-island model of how it could be done, the idea being to take this to the Solomons for 2023, but at scale. In 2019, there were 3,500 athletes. In 2023: 5,000. And that, Potoi said, is all about three Cs: communication, capacity-building and coordination. As Wong said, "To have high performance, you have to have high-performance support systems." Two weeks before the Games, Potoi said, some 100 people had been trained – police, fire, emergency teams, national hospital staff, Red Cross. The nearby anchored American Mercy Hospital Ship was also a valuable resource for the organisers. Its ice supplies "saved the day", Wong said.

Key lesson learned, both Wong and Potoi acknowledged: more sport-specific medical training for the next edition, in 2027 in Tahiti. "Olympic Solidarity has a real legacy here," Potoi said. "It not only helped these Pacific Games but left a legacy in the Solomon Islands, strengthening current medical services."

# Preparing for the future, aiming high: training camps as a development pathway

When specific training opportunities make a true difference for young hopefuls

Laura Bozoki is a teenage biathlete from Hungary. In the lead-up to the Winter Youth Olympic Games Gangwon 2024, she took part in a training camp jointly put on by the International Biathlon Union (IBU) and Olympic Solidarity. A “huge motivation”, she calls it now, adding, “I saw even more diversity and felt even greater challenges in biathlon.”

NOCs were eligible for opportunities through the Olympic Solidarity Youth Athlete Development programmes. One provided up to USD 30,000 for athletes, along with their coaches, to try to qualify for the 2024 YOG in Gangwon. Through another, Olympic Solidarity worked with the IFs, targeting smaller NOCs.

The governing Olympic Sports Federations could access annual grants of up to USD 50,000 to propose projects to the NOCs to provide targeted training and competition that smaller NOCs sometimes struggle to access. The IF engagement meant that these athletes and coaches had access to high-performance crafted activities that met their needs.

The International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation used its Olympic Solidarity grant to fund three such camps, in Europe, North America and Asia. More than 30 athletes from 12 NOCs went on to compete in Gangwon.

The International Luge Federation held three camps, in Asia, Oceania and Europe. Notably, two athletes from Thailand, Thiraphat Sata and Sunita Chaiyapantho, competed in Gangwon 2024.

**“I saw even more diversity and felt even greater challenges in biathlon.”**

Laura Bozoki, Hungary, Biathlon



Naturally on the programme at the IBU Lenzerheide youth camp: ‘focused shooting exercises’. Too, roller ski training, running and strength and mobility sessions – and how to use social media responsibly.  
© Courtesy IBU.

The World Curling Federation, building on the legacy of the Winter YOG Lillehammer 2016, used Olympic Solidarity funding to organise several camps in the Norwegian city, site of the 1994 Olympic Winter Games.

The IBU proved particularly enthusiastic about such development camps, including a week-long session in Antholz, Italy, that drew 18 male and 16 female athletes along with 12 male and five female coaches from 18 different national federations – with France’s Anais Bescond, a gold medalist in the mixed relay at the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Games, on hand as an Athlete Role Model. “Youth are the future, the future of our sport,” said IBU Development Director Dagmara Gerasimuk. “This is the obvious answer.” “You have to be prepared for the future and aim high,” said Gerold Sattlecker, head of the IBU Academy.

As things would play out, nearly two out of three athletes who attended the training activities through IBU, or 63 per cent, went on to compete in Gangwon. To the point about making the sport better: a December 2023 session in Pokljuna, Slovenia, included

a race preparation webinar for coaches and a workshop on how values influence decision-making in performance enhancement.

“At home,” said Christian Borch, a coach from Denmark, “we are pretty small communities with few athletes. Imagine then to be able to bring these athletes to an international environment, where [we] meet coaches and athletes from several other countries, hear about their lives, challenges and daily obstacles. It helps put your own situation into perspective. And these experiences form you – not only as athletes, but as a whole person with a broader perspective on life.”

One of the Danish athletes, Leonora Rønhede, like Laura Bozoki from Hungary, went on to compete at cold and windy – but fun – Gangwon 2024, Rønhede 14th in the 10k individual, 19th in the sprint, Bozoki behind but (this is the important part) finishing strong. Rønhede said, “Both the YOG and IBU have inspired me a lot!” She added, “My first IBU camp, in Pokljuna, was amazing and I had so much fun. YOG 2024 was even more amazing, and I am very satisfied with my results.”



# STRONGER TOGETHER

## Response to extraordinary circumstances

The Olympic Movement announced an emergency fund of USD 1 million to help the Olympic community, refugees and displaced people in areas affected by the devastating earthquake that hit Türkiye and Syria in February 2023. The IOC, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and the European Olympic Committees (EOC) each donated USD 250,000, while the Olympic Refuge Foundation made available USD 260,000 for assistance to the Olympic communities affected by the tragedy, the local population and the refugees in Türkiye.

When providing responses to extraordinary circumstances affecting NOCs, the IOC always aims to maximise the impact of its action by partnering with organisations of the Olympic Movement, primarily the Continental Association of NOCs of the continent concerned. The IOC support may also be accompanied by funding from the Olympic Solidarity fund for special projects.

## Advancing Governance

In 2023, the IOC continued to support the implementation of good governance principles by NOCs, recognising this as essential for the smooth and efficient operation of organisations within the Olympic Movement. The NOC Institutional and Governance Services unit provided assistance and guidance to more than 80 NOCs in the process of reviewing and updating their statutes to make them fully compliant with the Olympic Charter and the Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance within the Olympic Movement. As a result, 34 NOCs concluded the process during the year and could have their statutes formally approved by the IOC. In addition, 52 NOCs conducted their elections in compliance with their statutes and the Olympic Charter, and the results were acknowledged by the IOC. The unit has also supported NOCs in the resolution of internal governance issues and/or disputes with their respective governments, with a view to preserving the responsible autonomy of the NOCs in line with the Olympic Charter.

The IOC Executive Board suspended the NOC of Russia with immediate effect on 12 October 2023. The suspension followed the unilateral decision taken by the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) on 5 October 2023 to include, as its members, regional sports organisations that are under the authority of the NOC of Ukraine – namely Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia. The ROC's decision constituted a breach of the Olympic Charter because it violated the territorial integrity of the NOC of Ukraine,

as recognised by the IOC in accordance with the Olympic Charter. The suspension means that the ROC is not entitled to operate as an NOC, as defined in the Olympic Charter, and cannot receive any funding from the Olympic Movement.

The IOC Executive Board decided on 8 December 2023 that athletes with a Russian or a Belarusian passport who qualified through their IFs' existing qualification systems would be declared eligible to compete at Paris 2024 as Individual Neutral Athletes (AINs), in accordance with strict eligibility conditions based on recommendations made by the IOC Executive Board on 28 March 2023.

Further to the IOC Executive Board decision on 6 December 2022, the IOC continued to monitor the situation of the Olympic community in Afghanistan relating in particular to the issue of ensuring safe and inclusive access to sport for women and girls in the country. In June 2023, the IOC EB urged the Afghan NOC and the Afghan General Directorate of Physical Education and Sports to drastically strengthen and accelerate their efforts with the highest authorities in the country to reverse the restrictions in place. Some 17 female Afghan athletes competed at the Asian Games 2023, facilitated by Olympic Solidarity working with the Afghan NOC, and the IOC continued to support male and female athletes aiming to qualify for Paris 2024, with 10 Afghan athletes receiving Olympic Scholarships. The target is for the NOC to bring a mixed-gender team to the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

The NOC of Guatemala was suspended in 2022 following undue external interference in the NOC election process. Qualified athletes from Guatemala

participated as independent athletes in the Central American and Caribbean Games and the Pan-American Games in 2023<sup>1</sup>.

The IOC expressed serious concerns throughout 2023 about the situation of Iranian athletes and the Olympic community in the context of the upheavals and demonstrations in the country, and urged the Iranian NOC to take appropriate action with the highest authorities to protect the athletes and members of the Olympic community from a humanitarian perspective. At the IOC's request, the Iranian NOC visited Olympic House in February, making clear commitments to pursue and expand its efforts to safeguard the athletes' rights, from both a humanitarian and a sporting perspective, and to continue to act in accordance with the Olympic Charter and fully respect the principle of non-discrimination.

In Sudan, the majority of the staff and Executive Board of the NOC of Sudan fled after civil war broke out in April 2023. Since then, the NOC has been temporarily operating in exile from Cairo, Egypt, and will do so until further notice.

Since October 2023 and the start of the conflict in Israel and Palestine, the IOC has been in constant contact with the NOCs of both territories, reiterating that it will continue to do its utmost to help the Olympic community and athletes from both NOCs ahead of Paris 2024.

<sup>1</sup> On 19 March 2024, the IOC Executive Board provisionally lifted the suspension of the NOC of Guatemala since most of the pending issues had been resolved, and in the interests of the country's athletes ahead of the Olympic Games Paris 2024.



## Sharing knowledge and reinforcing administrative capacities

### IOC Immersion Stay Programme for NOCs

Two editions of the IOC Immersion stay programme took place in 2023, allowing NOC staff members to get familiar with IOC working processes and engage with their IOC counterparts. Thirteen NOC staff members – seven women and six men – were selected from the NOCs of Algeria, Barbados, Czechia, Hungary, Malawi, New Zealand, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Suriname and Zambia.

### 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 2023, the Administrative Subsidy was taken up by 200 NOCs, and the Additional Administrative Subsidy by 25. Some 58 NOCs also received assistance in 2023 for projects aimed at strengthening their administration in such areas as IT, capacity building, finance, strategic planning and communications.

← Basketball player Seimone Augustus (USA), who became a coach after ending her career as an athlete.

### National Courses for Sports Administrators

The goal of this programme is to strengthen the capacity of NOCs and their constituents through management training, delivered to national and regional sports administrators by NOCs using training materials and course frameworks provided by Olympic Solidarity. In 2023, 57 NOCs completed 136 Sports Administration Courses, benefitting 4,666 participants, while 603 participants from 29 NOCs completed a total of 33 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), and funded 53 MEMOS scholarships for participants from 48 NOCs in 2023.

### NOC Exchanges

NOC Exchanges are designed to help strengthen NOCs' administrative structures, and are thus an important part of organisational learning. In 2023, eight one-year projects were approved in 2023. In addition to two long-term projects that began in 2021 and 2022.



## FEMALE SPORTS PARTICIPATION

**70%** of NOCs have put in place programmes to increase **women's and girls' participation** in sport at grassroots level



**68%** of NOCs have put in place activities to increase **gender equality** awareness through sport



## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS



**68%** of NOCs have **gender equality** entrenched in their statutes

**80%** of NOCs have initiatives in place to advance **women into leadership roles**

**27%** average share of **women on NOC executive committees**

## NOC MANAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING PROGRAMMES



<b>10.8M USD</b>	NOC Administration Development
<b>1.3M USD</b>	Forums for NOCs and their Athletes
<b>1.2M USD</b>	National Courses for Sports Administrators
<b>0.9M USD</b>	International Executive Courses in Sports Management
<b>0.6M USD</b>	NOC Exchanges
<b>0.5M USD</b>	Special Projects

## DIGITAL COMMUNICATION



Communication channels most commonly used by NOCs

**84%** Website

**69%** Instagram

**85%** Facebook

Training opportunities offered by NOCs

**40%** Media training

**36%** Social media training

## SAFE SPORT

**45%** of NOCs have a trained safeguarding officer or lead or are currently undertaking the IOC safeguarding course



**38%** of NOCs have an ombudsperson (dedicated person to receive and deal with athletes complaints)



**39%** of NOCs provide an athlete support programme in mental health (collaboration with a sport psychologist)



# Now everyone can know Moldova (and anywhere): a digital strategy makes the future, now

Small steps – big impacts

Landlocked Moldova lies in eastern Europe, Romania to the west, Ukraine to the east. It makes for a classic example of a small-state NOC. Its entire annual budget runs to roughly USD 1 million, Secretary General Cristina Vasilianov said. In 2024, with budgets tight, digital communication offers a window of opportunity to break out. A small opportunity can perhaps bring a bigger return. “No one knows Moldova,” Vasilianov said. “If you ask the IOC members or my international colleagues if they have been here – no one.”

The neighbouring conflict that broke out in 2022 inevitably affected Moldova, on the border with Ukraine. An influx of refugees complicated matters. Moldova is typically described as having one of the lowest GDPs per capita in Europe. For the NOC, as for most NOCs worldwide, seeking funds from Olympic Solidarity was essential. The NOC of Moldova has only 13 full-time staff members. “You have to be photographer, cleaner, driver – having a small number of staff I am totally involved in all processes,” Vasilianov, a former fencer who has been Secretary General of her NOC for 15 years,

said. With so many things to do, so few hands to do it – why commit time and resources, and what kinds of resources, to a strategy heavy on digitalisation and, moreover, outward-facing communication? Why invest? What to expect? What benefits might there be? Turns out Moldova offers a classic answer – one that perhaps can serve as an example worldwide.

Olympic Solidarity sponsored a regional seminar on digital communication and media, first organised in 2019 by the NOC of Azerbaijan, then twice more, including in Lausanne in December 2023, a session that drew 17 NOCs from three continents and expertise in the field brought by ANOC and the IOC digital team. This unique initiative allowed NOCs to share knowledge and best practices, presenting on athletes as storytellers; AI solutions for productivity, data analysis and content; Olympic Games digital challenges from an IF perspective; and lessons learned from the 2023 European Games in Poland, the European Youth Olympic Festival in Slovenia and the Asian Games in China. Additionally, the Azerbaijan NOC also explained how

sponsor-oriented social media content creation could drive change.

In Moldova, meanwhile, Vasilianov had already secured funding from Olympic Solidarity, via the NOC Exchanges programme, and technical advice from the NOC Institutional Relations and Governance and IOC Television and Marketing Services teams. A first project brought internal accounting into the digital age. “We jumped,” she said, “from the 19th to the 21st century.” Then a re-do of the NOC logo – “Team Moldova” – and a campaign, an entire new visual identity, focused on every athlete. The result? The NOC already signed a new sponsor, a bank, with eyes on more. “I cannot say this is because of the new logo, we had a relationship,” Vasilianov says, then stopped and corrected herself: “But – why not? This is also because of the new logo, all this campaigning and attention. I would say, yes, this logo works.” She added, “Moldova starts to be visible. Before, we were invisible. This is

about digitalisation. “The more digital we are,” she said, smiling, “the more time we will have.” Of course, she said, the ambition is to add yet more new sponsors: “We have quite a lot of plans. When we speak of digitalisation there is no limit.”

**“Moldova starts to be visible. Before, we were invisible. This is about digitalisation.”**

Cristina Vasilianov, Moldova, Secretary General



Archer Dan Olaru with the new NOC logo after becoming the first from Moldova to qualify for Paris 2024. © Courtesy NOC Moldova.



# OLYMPISM EVERY DAY, EVERYWHERE

## Olympic Values

The four main types of financial assistance offered by Olympic Solidarity through its Olympic Values programme were distributed as follows:

1. Initiatives/projects run by the NOC or with a partner organisation (129 NOCs)
2. Scholarships for training/education (127 NOCs)
3. Participation in the International Olympic Academy (IOA) Sessions for National Olympic Academies (NOAs) and Young Olympic Ambassadors (270 sessions supported)
4. Olympic Day celebrations: 157 grants allocated in 2023.



## Olympism365

Launched in 2022, Olympism365 is the IOC's strategy to strengthen the role of sport as an important enabler for the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). It brings together initiatives that promote safe, inclusive and sustainable sport, impacting people's lives in areas like education, employment, sustainability, equality, inclusion, health, crime prevention, peace and safety.

In 2023, in addition to delivering hundreds of Olympic values projects that increase access to sport and its benefits, NOCs also contributed to cross-sector collaboration to advance the UN SDGs using sport through their engagement with Olympism365-supported consortia, including by:

**Providing expert input to Olympism365 initiatives through national and thematic advisory groups.** For example, NOCs, including those of Cabo Verde, Luxembourg and Panama, actively contributed to the MoveNow.Move365 expert workshops series aimed at identifying barriers and enablers for youth sport participation.

**Contributing to the development of collaborative initiatives and engaging national sport for development organisations.** For instance, the NOC of Vietnam supported the co-creation of the Olympism365-supported Community Sport and Health Cooperation initiative in Vietnam, delivered in cooperation with the World Health Organization and global health NGO PATH, and ensured the engagement of relevant local stakeholders.

**Delivering sport for sustainable development initiatives as part of Olympism365 consortia.** As part of the Olympism365-supported Sport, Education and Livelihoods initiative in Latin America, the NOC of Mexico is working in a consortium of 21 organisations that includes Panam Sports, civil society organisations, UN entities, public authorities and development banks to deliver sport-based community programmes. Since its launch in 2023, 13,500 young people across eight countries have been supported to develop transferable employment skills and improve access to education, employment and economic participation opportunities.

## THROUGH THE COLLECTIVE APPROACH OF OLYMPISM365, AT THE END OF 2023



# 20M PEOPLE

had been reached through activations and awareness-raising on sport and sustainable development



# 60,000 PEOPLE

had benefitted from regular participation in sport-based community programmes

# 370 ORGANISATIONS

had been trained to deliver sport and sustainable development programmes

## OLYMPIC DAY

# 157

Participating NOCs

# 15M+

Participants did physical activity on Olympic Day



# 76%

included Olympians/athletes



# 98%

organised multisports activities



# 64%

organised an Olympic Day Run



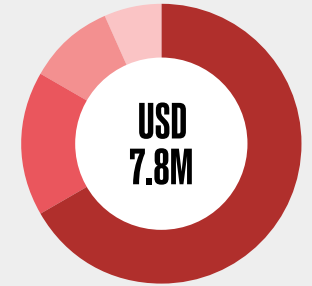
# 86%

engaged with social networks



## OLYMPIC VALUES PROGRAMME

- USD 5.2M Initiatives
- USD 1.3M Scholarships
- USD 0.8M Olympic Day
- USD 0.3M International Olympic Academy (IOA) International Sessions



## OLYMPIC VALUES



Initiatives/projects run by the NOC or with a partner organisation

# 129

NOCS



Scholarships toward training/education

# 127

NOCS



Participation in the International Olympic Academy (IOA) Sessions for National Olympic Academies (NOAs) and Young Olympic Ambassadors

# 270

PARTICIPANTS SUPPORTED

## In Uganda, driving systemic change

At the grassroots, in the boardroom, on the podium

Leading into the Paris Games, where for the first time female athletes will have as many places on the field of play as the men, it's no secret the Olympic world has sought to make gender equality an emphasis. In Uganda, change has been systemic. Deliberate. At the high-performance level – on the Olympic team – and the grass roots. In both the Olympic and Paralympic sectors. In schools, workplace and management. It has been far-reaching though, to be clear, it's far from complete. It starts from this fundamental mind shift: "Gender is not a barrier," said Rosette Sayson Meya, Chair of the National Olympic Committee's Gender, Equity and Diversity Commission. "It's just a factor. One of many."

Sayson comes from a family of seven brothers, second from last in the birth order. She is formidable. But people don't do things around her because they're scared. They want to make it work not just for her but with her. "At times," said Elijah Njawuzi, the NOC staffer in charge of Olympic Solidarity matters, "I just sit back, I look at her, I'm like, 'Mom, you take the lead, everything is going to be cool.'"

Top: A group photo amid 2023 International Women's Day spotlights real change driven by the Uganda Olympic Committee: to empower girls and women Bottom: A netball get-together in Uganda illustrating a powerful paradigm: the next generation of girls and young women, encouraged to speak up – literally and figuratively to raise their hands. © Courtesy NOC Uganda.



In Uganda, the approach, as explained in a position paper: "There is a dire need to shift women and girls' leaders' consciousness in a transformative way." When that happens, women can "take up more leadership roles in civil society, communities and political spaces", their "leadership capabilities [shifting] from short-term to long-term sustainable benefits".

The NOC's core values start with "excellence" as No. 1 and then go directly, at No. 2, to "inclusivity": "We embrace equity, diversity, gender intersectionality, mutual respect and multiple perspectives of human identity." Such far-reaching declarations need to be matched with commitment. Ten, 12 years ago, the NOC's Executive Committee surveyed the country. From top levels of management to its coaches, almost all slots were filled by men. "This," Njawuzi said, "was alarming." The NOC's constitution now includes a provision that advocates for women's equal participation on and off the field of play. The team Uganda sent to Tokyo 2020: 12 men, 13 women. In the women's 3,000 m steeplechase, Peruth Chemutai became the first Ugandan woman ever to win an Olympic medal – and a gold one, at that.

Olympic Solidarity-funded Sports Administrators Courses (SAC) and Advanced Sports Management Courses (ASMC), traditionally a direct path to, through and into top sports management positions, encourage female participation by proposing higher subsidies for minimum 40 per cent female participation, which is not easily achieved in several countries. In Uganda, the average female participation since 2021 at SAC has been 63 per cent (100 per cent in 2023) and 67 per cent at ASMC. The last three Ugandan graduates of the Executive Master in Sports Management programme, MEMOS – all

**"We [the NOC of Uganda] embrace equity, diversity, gender intersectionality, mutual respect and multiple perspectives of human identity."**

Rosette Sayson Meya, Chair of the National Olympic Committee's Gender, Equity and Diversity Commission

women. The NOC commission chairs? Five women, six men. At the grassroots: a March 2023 workshop, funded by Olympic Solidarity, commemorating International Women's Day that brought together 60 girls. Asked to share challenges – boys chosen first, not enough female teachers, menstrual challenges, parental pushback, balancing sport and school – the girls offered the solution. Clubs. More time for all for sports. A girl who's got special sports talent? Recognise that. Everything starts, they said, by knowing every girl has a voice. And has every right to speak up. Equally important, Sayson said: the boys. As they grow into young men, it's imperative they become what she calls "ambassadors of gender equality". When you set out to empower young women, she said, girls can – and do – and grow up knowing gender is just a factor. Simply one of many.

# In Oceania, building a network with a shared commitment to equal, safe and inclusive sport

Joining forces for everyone's benefit

To ensure safety in Olympic sport takes many actors, from the sports movement and from wider society. A pivotal SafeSport workshop in Oceania marked an inflection point – a shared commitment to, first, the promotion of equity, next, inclusion in and through sport, and then, critically, ending violence against girls and women. How to do these things? One, raise awareness. As Liz Dawson, President of the New Zealand NOC, would say later in an interview, “Equality is just getting the same stuff. Equity is levelling the playing field.” Two, train people of good faith and good will.

The Oceania Sport, Equality and Inclusive Communities Impact Network is the umbrella name for a collection of organisations: ONOC, through its Equity Commission; UN Women; the Australian Government's sport for development programme “Team Up,” and the IOC, in particular through Olympic Solidarity and Olympism365. Olympism 365 is the IOC's strategy to strengthen the role of sport as an important enabler for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in

line with Recommendation 10 of Olympic Agenda 2020+5. Across such a wide region, a fundamental: collaborating on pilot projects to try to build a network with a shared commitment to equal, safe and inclusive sport. Thus, in simple terms: for the Impact Network, safeguarding is a key priority – with an eye towards now and, already, the Olympic Summer Games Brisbane 2032. As Delphine Sergumaga, the UN Women Fiji multi-country office representative, said at the workshop, which ran for three days in Nadi (Fiji) in October 2023, according to an ONOC news release, “The Pacific has some of the highest rates of violence against women and girls,” Papua New Guinea often ranked as likely the worst place in the world for violence against women, “and UN Women... has been collaborating closely with sporting partners... recognising the power that sport has in the region to influence transformational change”. Sixteen of the 17 NOCs from across the far-flung region took part; since then, all have used lessons learned in local or national workshops ahead of the 2024 Paris Games. Moreover, for further safeguarding support, up to USD 10,000



A pivotal moment toward safer, more inclusive and gender-equal sport in the Pacific: some 70 people from 16 nations, underscoring the region's commitment to safeguarding.

is available – from Olympic Solidarity's Olympic Values Unit – for each of the Pacific Islands NOCs: with this substantial funding designed to kickstart next-step action plans. In all, the Nadi meeting had 70 participants, from 32 sporting bodies and 13 sports, including rugby, often a social force across the islands of the Pacific. Among them, as a TeamUp report would later note: Macho Letia, “amplifying impact” through the Nauru Rugby Inclusion Impact programme; Mary Estelle Mahuk, “affectionately known as the ‘Golden Mama Blong Vanuatu’”; and Maria Rarawa, a “driving force” in the Solomon Islands' Just Play programme. Roshika Deo, GEDSI and safeguarding advisor with TeamUp, helped lead events in Nadi. “The impact of the network, because of the different partners, has been able to provide not only the governance strengthening, the policy support, but also to have instilled this knowledge in people,” she said, adding, “the motivation, so to speak; the confidence they can do something. “Whether it's to train staff, to put in a policy, to put training in the policy, a flow chart – now they know they have these resources, this network.” The IOC

in March 2023 announced the creation of a USD 10 million fund per Olympiad for safeguarding.

Dawson, who also serves as a member of the IOC Safeguarding Working Group and as co-chair of the ONOC Equity Commission, said, “It's all well and good bringing in these concepts and ideas from Europe and the Americas. If they don't fit the context and aren't designed for a local and regional basis, you're almost guaranteed that the success factor is going to be a lot less.” Evidence of what was always intended to be this full-circle approach: workshops for national federations in Guam, sessions as well in Tuvalu, Federated States of Micronesia and Samoa, delegates from Fiji bound for Paris 2024 educated around the Games. And at the get-together in Fiji of how it could be a jumpstart, from some of the comments offered at the time: “This workshop is an eye-opener for me. Coming from the service providers' aspect, I've learnt on the different arms of sports and its governing board...” As well: “A very necessary and worthwhile initiative.”

**“The Pacific has some of the highest rates of violence against women and girls.”**

Delphine Sergumaga, the UN Women Fiji multi-country office representative

# Vietnam shows a way: building healthier and more active communities through sport

Public and private actors join forces with the Olympic Movement to reach the SDGs through sport

When the World Health Organization's report detailing the state of not just fitness but the overall health of the 98 million people in Vietnam came out in early 2023, Dr Hien Le, Director of the Primary Health Care Programme at global health non-profit PATH, in Hanoi, looked it over, took a deep breath and said, "We need to address this public health crisis."

PATH, an NGO aiming at health equity by partnering with public institutions, businesses, grassroots groups, and investors to solve the world's most pressing health challenges, felt that it needed to act. More than 80 per cent of young people – to be precise, 82 per cent of adolescent boys aged 11 to 17, and 91 per cent of girls – were not sufficiently physically active. "Many young people suffer from being overweight. They spend too much time sitting in front of the TV or the computer screen. When they do this," she said, "they don't move. And parents worry about this." At the other end of life, four of five deaths were due to noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) – such as cancer, diabetes, respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

**"Physical education in schools has improved. But we still have room for improvement."**

Dr Hien Le, Hanoi, Director of the Primary Health Care Programme at global health non-profit PATH

"Really alarming," said Dr Le. As the WHO numbers make clear, this is a challenge almost everywhere in our world<sup>1</sup>. One of the responses to this challenge is the new Community Sport and Health Cooperation Initiative launched by the IOC through its Olympism365 strategy, together with WHO and PATH in Vietnam, aiming to strengthen

<sup>1</sup> 81% of adolescents and 27.5% of adults do not meet WHO's recommended levels of physical activity. Recommended level for adolescents is at least 60 minutes of moderate-to vigorous intensity physical activity daily. Recommended level for adults is at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity.

the role of sport as an enabler for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in line with Recommendation 10 of Olympic Agenda 2020+5. PATH has a long track record working on NCDs around the world. The initiative will build on an NCD-learning project that PATH launched in Vietnam in 2022 called "Fit for Future". It has since reached more than 10,000 students; at the provincial and district levels, more than 200 teachers and administrators have been trained to use the related phone app, which directly aims to get students to be more physically active.

The initiative is part of an overall Technical Cooperation Agreement between the IOC and WHO, contributing to WHO's Global Action Plan towards a 15 per cent reduction in the "prevalence of physical inactivity" in adolescents and adults by 2023. The trick is how to move from strategies, plans and targets to concrete action and impact. Bringing on board the right people and organisations is key.

The approach in Vietnam has centred on bringing forth those at the local, national and global levels to best ensure the project responds to on-the-ground needs. Among them, the NOC of Vietnam supported the organisation of working sessions that ensured that all affected people were represented. Its active contribution during the initial phase provided an ideal starting point and generated the needed impetus to mobilise and engage local civil society organisations and governmental bodies.

"Nowadays," said Dr Le, "physical education in schools has improved. But we still have room for improvement. And to engage more students in daily sports activities. And make it feel fun. And make them want to voluntarily enjoy sport." The initiative will definitely make a major contribution to healthier lifestyles thanks to its ability to bring together health and sports professionals and unite their efforts to achieve a more physically active population.



Getting kids into sport in Vietnam – in all, a partnership joining PATH, the WHO and IOC aims to increase access to health-enhancing activities for over 1 million people across five nations by 2025.

# Pledging to use sport to better the lives of refugees in our fragile world

NOCs join a collective and solidarity effort to ensure Refugees enjoy the benefits of sport

Ali is a little boy from Syria. A refugee, he is now in Greece. As the story goes (it's true), Ali was one of 38 children who got to go to a second-division Greek basketball game. Ali lives in a refugee reception facility about an hour from Athens. It was a good game all around, close until the end. With great happiness – kids are kids – Ali told the grownups afterward (this is the best part, again because it's true) it was the best 40 minutes of his life. There is policy and there is how it can, and should, play out in real life – making kids who have little, happy. This is that story.

The 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF) took place in December 2023 in Geneva. The GRF takes place every four years. It brings together states, advocates and an array of other stakeholders. As 2023 got underway, as the delegates heard, some 110 million people on our planet were forcibly displaced because of persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations. To be clear, sport cannot fix the structural drivers of any or many conflicts. But it can offer a path to inclusion, protection and better mental health.

This is the essence of the Olympic Games. And why of course the IOC established the Olympic Refugee Foundation in 2017, in the wake of the participation at Rio 2016 of the first Refugee Olympic Team. Paris 2024 will see a third Summer Games edition of the Refugee Team. Too, it was the message of the IOC, through Olympic Solidarity, at the Forum: for displaced persons, sport ought not to be just a “nice to have”. It can and should be viewed for what it is: important. As IOC President Thomas Bach says frequently, our world is “fragile and broken”. At the 2023 Forum, more than 135 entities committed, through what is called the “Multistakeholder Sport Pledge,” worth more than USD 50 million, to use sport to aim to better the lives of refugees. Organisers estimate funds will go toward some 825,000 displaced people and host community members.

The Pledge includes over 40 NOCs and IFs, along with governments, refugee-led organisations, UN agencies, private sector groups and more. A wide array of NOCs – from around the world, some with more resources, others perhaps with less but



IOC President Thomas Bach announcing the Joint Sport Pledge on behalf of the Sport for Refugees Coalition at the Global Refugee Forum, committing USD \$45 million to benefit 500,000 displaced people.

no less committed – signed up. The list includes the NOCs of, among others, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Kenya, Moldova, Norway, Qatar, Rwanda and Slovakia.

Katrin Grafarend, Head of International Relations at the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB), told the forum that NOCs play a key role as “important connectors” in implementing the Pledge, especially in “allocating resources” and “fostering partnerships”. “The GRF is a key moment for us to advocate for sport to be better leveraged by non-sport actors to meet objectives of supporting young people living in displacement contexts. It will help more practitioners and policy makers adopt sport into their work supporting refugees and displaced people.” As part of the Pledge, she told the delegates that the DOSB would be partnering with the Greek Olympic Committee to implement a EUR 2 million (roughly USD 2.1 million) project called “Together in Sport”.

The goal: to reach 10,000 young refugees in Greece, including unaccompanied

minors and young people with a disability, with activities running through to 2026. This is how Ali went to the basketball game that day, said Gabriel Mujollari, the Hellenic Olympic Committee’s Project Officer. Along with another little boy, Jatin from India, added his DOSB counterpart, Tobias Antoni. Players from both teams, you should know, took pictures with the kids and high-fived them. Also true: Jatin said afterward he was never, ever going to wash his hand!

**“The GRF is a key moment for us to advocate for sport to be better leveraged by non-sport actors to meet objectives of supporting young people living in displacement contexts.”**

Katrin Grafarend, Head of International Relations at the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB)





## THE PLEDGE

Together, we pledge to mobilise resources, expertise and networks to promote access to and opportunities through sport for, and with, displaced people and host communities, contributing to more inclusive, tolerant and cohesive societies.

140+

organisations joining the Pledge



44

NOCs and

24

IFs working with the IOC Recommendation 11 of the IOC's Roadmap for the Olympic Movement, Olympic Agenda 2020+5

15+

advocacy events and opportunities



USD 1.53M

donation from existing and new supporters



Olympic Refugee Foundation



programmes **16**

5

new countries

(Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Jordan, Türkiye, Uganda)



coaches trained to deliver **safe and structured** sport for protection activities

**1,622+**

71

athletes, supported by 23 host NOCs, benefitted from the Refugee Athlete Support for Paris 2024 programme



refugee athletes benefitted from the Athlete Career Transition programme

**5**

152

safe sporting spaces created, refurbished or enhanced for

**132,600**

young people affected by displacement participating in ORF programmes



# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Financial information on Olympic Solidarity and IOC funding for NOCs will be available in the IOC Annual Report 2023 to be published soon on the IOC website.

Financial information about the Olympic Refugee Foundation can be found here: [Resources | Olympic Refugee Foundation](#) (olympics.com).

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## **Statistics**

Unless otherwise stated, all statistics are from the IOC Annual Report 2023 or from the NOC Annual Review 2023. 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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Getting ready for the  
Olympic Games Paris 2024