

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH SPORT AND OLYMPIC IDEAL

QUESTIONNAIRE

1- How is sport used in your country to promote human rights? What are the best practices being applied?

- Sport is an integral part of the Qatar National Vision 2030, which highlights the pathway for the country's development. Qatar Olympic Committee has further developed the sport sector strategy in alignment with the Qatar National Vision 2030. A desired outcome is to engage all the residents that are living in Qatar in sport practices while at the same time encourage the education and promotion of its values. The values of sport and Olympism focus on ethics and respect for one another.
- Sport can be the source of protection and promotion of human rights as it reflects a healthy and developed society, wherein its members, irrespective of their age, gender, race, nationality, education or culture are enjoying its benefits.
- Qatar enjoys a unique opportunity of diverse society that is represented by expatriates from more than 100 countries, who, together with the Qatari nationals, enjoy sport. There are annual community sports programs that give the opportunity for different groups that live in Qatar to mix, co-practice or compete in sports. This sense of togetherness, brings also awareness and therefore respect for one another and their human rights.
- The National Sport Day, established in 2011 by an Emiri Decree with a mandate to all residents living in Qatar and organisations, companies, authorities to practice sport. This event is a good example of how sport can unite people from different nationalities, culture, religion, race, age, gender and background. For one day a year, all the residents living in Qatar participate together to practice sports throughout the country. Therefore, organizing events that are open to all residents living in Qatar is just one of the many practices being applied in Qatar as a way in promoting human rights.
- The Schools Olympic Program that has taken place for 7 consecutive years brings together students from different schools, nationalities and backgrounds that practice sports but also learn about the important values of Olympism. Every school season, the program of the year is associated with a social theme and the participating students are educated on the subject and also do relevant activities. This program is targeted at all the youth that are living in Qatar who will be educated in the values of Olympism and of human rights and in their turn will take further action to protect and promote them. Paralympic sports are also part of the Schools Olympic Program as an effort to raise awareness and achieve the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Qatar is a country under significant development. There is a significant number of workers that are present in the country that come from certain countries. Their daily life involves hard days at work mainly in construction projects. Sport has been a recognition of their efforts either by organising leagues where they can participate and change their routine or by inviting them to attend sport events hosted in the country.
- A number of activities and programs are carried out under the theme 'Sport for All' aimed at providing all the residents living in Qatar with the tools to have a

physical activity and to practice sport at various levels and we have received great empowerment by the Qatari government.

2- What are the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to strengthen respect for human rights?

- Sport is associated with physical activity, healthy living, education, culture as well as values such as equality, ethos, integrity, respect. Any person involved in sports has certainly come across these values.
- Raising awareness on the benefits of sport and on the Olympic Values offers a direct support and strengthens the respect of the human rights.
- Ensuring that programs are created for all the population with no discrimination and on equal basis is a direct and solid way of acknowledging and respecting one another and their rights.
- Youth Sport programs are particularly successful in creating more socially mature personalities and ones that have great respect for other's abilities or disabilities, limitations and the right for equal chances.
- In sport there is no importance on the country of origin, color of skin, gender, religion or background. Individuals are given equal chance to compete to the best of their abilities. Sport For All programs can greatly support the inclusion of a vast number of individuals from different groups. This effort will raise awareness, increase the self esteem of persons, unite with one common goal, educate and ultimately protect the human rights.
- School and youth programs, events and competitions for All, Olympic Academies, Olympic Museum and other solidarity programs serve the Olympic Values and can extend support in strengthening respect of human rights.

3- What are the sports practiced in your country and how far are they all inclusive (for women, youth vulnerable groups, etc.)?

- The sports that are practiced in Qatar are divided into professional sports and the community sports.
- In terms of professional sports, there are 27 National Federations that work for the development of the sport and the organisation of sport events in the country. In addition there is a separate committee looking after the women in sport participation and a federation looking after the development of sports for people with disabilities.
- In terms of community sports, there are a number of organisations that are encouraged and supported to organize community sports. There are schedules of regular sport activities and classes as well as leagues where individuals or groups can join in. Corporate games and clubs are present and promote the participation of their employees in sports.
- In all above community sports practices the entire population is welcome to join irrespective of nationality, age, gender. There are specific programs created for the youth, others are targeted more for women and there are festivals that are organised for people with disability to be inclusive in sports.

4- In what way can sport and the Olympic ideal become a means to: a) advance the cause of peace? b) promote development? c) combat all forms of discrimination?

- Hosting and / or participating in international events and ultimately the Olympic Games is the biggest manifestation of international peace, truce, respect and acceptance of one another. There can be no true international sport event with borders closed to certain participants. International sport world would condemn.
- Cities or countries hosting events respect the Olympic Truce and are required to deal with the participating countries equally while protecting the athletes and the officials. On the other hand, the participants accept their components and treat all competitors equally. In most cases they share the same roof during the competition period and come to share and exchange their views, cultures and religions. They become an Olympic Family for the days of the event and share the same challenges and emotions.
- Sport and the Olympic Values become the means to promote development when accompanying programs and activities are created to support and raise awareness on the environment, education and culture, to name a few areas of human development. Sport development is also noted when more advanced countries in sport infrastructure or sport knowledge join efforts with less privileged ones in an effort to support. Qatar Olympic Committee has presented commitment in establishing sports venues in countries with financial or political challenges such as Eritrea, Lebanon, Palestine.
- There can be no type of discrimination in any sport practice, based on the Olympic Values. No discrimination on the race, educational background, financial status or origin is applied in true sport practice. All participants share equal rights.
- Media play an important role in the modern community. Their contribution in the support and promotion of human rights is great in the sense that the Olympic Values are communicated to the world. Negative publicity on those who neglect or act against human rights is also important as public opinion can drive forces to alter such actions.

5- What kinds of challenges are faced in promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal?

- The national political strategy of governments can be a great challenge in promoting peace, human rights and other Olympic Values. There should be great alignment of the government decisions with the Olympic practice in the country.
- Customs and traditions can be a challenge as in some cases there are practices which can be discriminating and a halt to the involvement of women, people of certain age group, race or background.
- Lack of awareness and low level of social education is the greatest challenge. Raising awareness on sport and its values, educating the nationals or the population, engaging more the public can have ultimate rewarding benefits.
- Political or financial instability as well as extreme national defense strategy can be a cause of discrimination.
- Media and social media can be a tool that could potentially be misused and support directly or indirectly discrimination or conflict.

6- How can the media help in the promotion of human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal?

- In modern times, media has great influence in the shaping of public opinion. The media coverage of events allows for information to travel fast globally. In the case where human rights are obstructed, media sheds light and helps combat such actions
- Media is a great tool for raising awareness and educating the public. Through information that is published or announced, public can become more aware and be better educated on any matter relating to the human rights and the Olympic ideals.
- The social media platforms are an effective and great way for opinions to be heard, equal rights to be promoted and information on human rights and Olympic values to access the users instantly and directly.