



Wilton Park



Image: Amit Kumar Singh, Manjari Foundation

Report

**Scaling up sport's contribution to the SDGs:
partnerships for impact**

**Focus on gender equality (SDG5) and peace, justice
and strong institutions (SDG16)**

Monday 22 – Wednesday 24 July 2019 | WP1707

In association with:





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Scaling up sport's contribution to the SDGs: partnerships for impact

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In partnership with the Bond Sport for Development and Peace Group, Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, United Purpose and Comic Relief

Summary

Sport has a unique ability to unify and inspire diverse audiences across the globe. With its universal appeal and cultural value, sport has enormous potential to act as a catalyst to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - a series of ambitious targets to end extreme poverty, advance inclusive development and tackle climate change by 2030

Whether using sport for sports' sake, or sports-based activities, the potential for the sport for development and peace (SDP) "sector" to improve the lives of individuals or communities and contribute to gender equality or reducing violence or bring communities together after conflict for example is significant. However, scale-up from the often small, pilot projects, is hard. The SDP sector has been growing in recent years, with many of the stronger organisations and partnerships building up their evidence-based approaches to demonstrate impact that in turn supports scale-up and sustainability of programmes of activities.

For Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) to be more successful than it already is, through the vast range of different organisations and approaches that exist, achieving larger reach and impact, it is suggested that:

- a systemic change in thinking will be needed across all those working in this space including sports organisations and bodies, development actors, those working to build peace and reduce violence and, crucially, the youth themselves;
- greater ownership of SDP at the local level, whether national and/or local governments, communities, participants;
- there will be a growing collaboration between those involved in the SDP sector and the sports sector; also partnerships between governments and organisations using sport or sport-based activities to achieve development objectives;
- SDP will be included in formal government policies;
- SDP will be mainstreamed into development NGOs;
- successful SDP programmes should be youth-led and fully inclusive, including people with disabilities;
- social enterprises are likely to play a greater role in SDP sector;
- cross-sector sharing of frameworks for impact and evidence – and development of some commonality of developing impact (tools to help such as the bank of model

indicators that is being developed by Commonwealth Secretariat with UNESCO; the local project-based indicators developed by Generations for Peace; the Laureus for Sport impact report on Gender; the upcoming stories being developed by Upshot);

- evidence-based practices will need to become common-place across the sector;
- a stronger narrative about the benefits and impact of SDP be developed;
- a focus on scale-up and sustainability will be at the forefront of policies and programmes.

“Sport has the power to change lives. By teaching women and girls teamwork, self-reliance, resilience and confidence, sport is one of the great drivers of gender equality. Women in sport defy gender stereotypes and social norms, make inspiring role models, and show men and women as equals”. ([UN Women](#))

Introduction

1. In partnership with the Bond Sport for Development and Peace group, Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, United Purpose and Comic Relief, Wilton Park convened a high-level conference on Scaling up sport’s contribution to the SDGs : partnerships for impact, bringing together over 50 participants involved in sport for development, representing United Nations agencies, International Organisations, donors, officials and others leading local grassroot organisations using sport as a catalyst to contribute to meeting the ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The conference had a particular focus on how SDP can contribute to SDG 5 gender equality, SDG 16 peace, justice and strong institutions and SDG 17 Partnerships for the goal.
2. This meeting followed an earlier Wilton Park discussion on SDP in 2015, titled [“Sport for development: a catalyst for change”](#). This event had looked beyond sport’s impact on physical wellbeing at the role it can play in generating a more prosperous and more peaceful society.
3. Since then significant progress has been made in the use of sport for SDP, and the reach and impact being achieved by those working in this space. However, it is recognised that there is still a sense of a lack of coordination amongst the civil society sector and across the wider sport community and international organisations, not least since the closure of the UN’s Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) in May 2017. There is a recognised need to amplify the SDP voice, encouraging a more diverse set of actors to employ sport as a tool for development.
4. This 2019 Wilton Park meeting therefore created an active network between participants providing opportunity for, and space to identify, stimulating and impactful collaboration, especially with other development players to address some of these needs and opportunities to build SDP.
5. Building on the evidence and experiences collected by the UN General Assembly and UN agencies, like UNESCO and UNICEF, international platforms such as the International Olympic Committee and the Commonwealth as well as national action plans and grassroot organisations across the world participants explored how sport can be a catalyst to achieving the SDG’s while highlighting on the important role of partnership in achieving this.

The power of sport

6. For SDP to work the key is the specific development objectives which sports-based programmes are trying to achieve, using sport or sports-based activities, as a tool – in and through sport – and beyond sport for sport’s sake. Such SDP programmes can tap into the power of sport, but do not necessarily have to be quality sport to achieve the broader objectives being set. Sport-based activities need to be age appropriate, borrowing from sports drills as appropriate, with quality contact between participant

All quotes noted in the left-hand margin were made by participants at the meeting.

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“Sports can effectively impact areas like diversity, inclusion, livelihood, peace & development in the society”

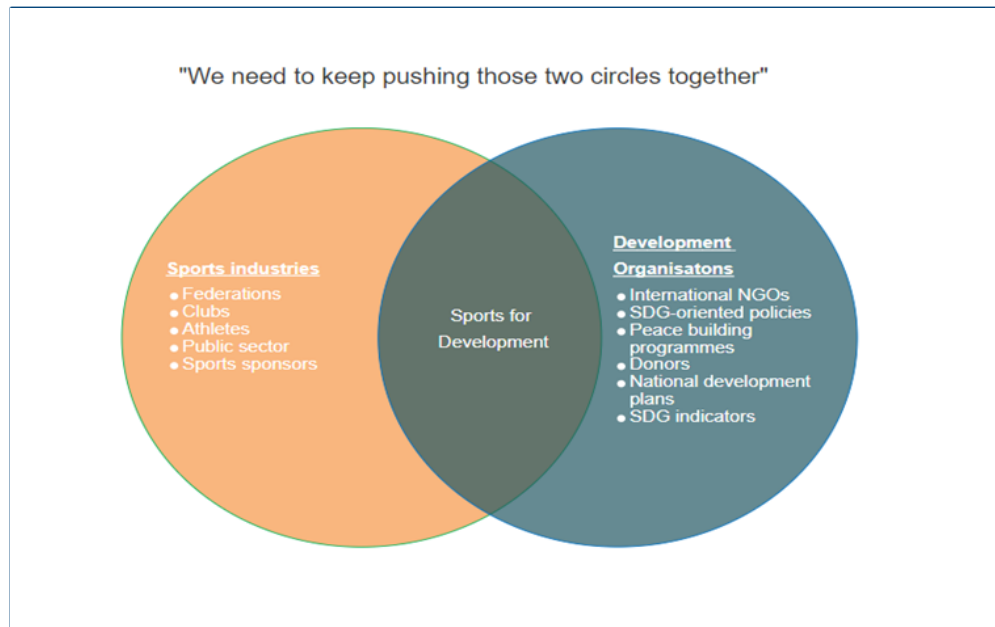
and facilitator. The role of the facilitator of such programmes is crucial, and the benefit of seeing them as facilitators rather than coaches was noted. Such facilitators, whether paid or volunteer, become role models, and the success of programmes they lead depend significantly on their experience and training, and the quality of the contact they have with those on the programmes.

7. Other important elements include: session design; creating a safe space, including when working with girls and people at risk; inviting the right people. Different sporting activities may be used, for example high-risk activities for youth at risk such as boxing:
 - Good practice: Fight for Peace’s Safer Communities Programme using boxing and martial arts on youth violence reduction programming.
8. Sport may not appeal to all children, or to some of the development actors who disliked sport at school and may not see the benefit of SDP. Neither is sport a panacea, but aligned alongside and within existing development programming it can bring a powerful additional component.
9. Sports organisations, sporting bodies and the sports industry have assets and can provide services and consultancy as well as resources. However, for those involved there is also a recognition of the need to hold back the non-developmental aspects in sport, for example celebrating elitism or worse.

International frameworks promoting Sport for Development, for Gender Equality and Peace

10. A number of international frameworks highlight the power that sport has for social transformation, which has been widely recognised by international bodies.
 - The [Kazan Action Plan](#), adopted in 2017 by UNESCO’s Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport, highlights the potential of physical education, physical activity and sport to the achievement of the SDGs. In this document, “the term ‘sport’ is used as a generic term, comprising sport for all, physical play, recreation, dance, organized, casual, competitive, traditional and indigenous sports and games in their diverse forms” (UNESCO, 2017).
 - In 2018, in the context of the [resolution of “Sports for development and peace”](#), sport was [recognised by the UN](#) not only as an enabler for **sustainable development and peace**, but as a way to empower women and girls, promote tolerance and respect, as well as bring health and education benefits.
 - Since the Millennium Development Goals, in 2002, the United Nations established an inter-agency task force on sport for development and peace. A report is [available online](#).
 - The Commonwealth Secretariat supports and encourages member countries to use sport for the national achievement of the SDGs, focusing on three main areas: 1) sports impact on SDGs, 2) development of national policies and strategies, and 3) capacity building of national leaders and officials.

“In the Commonwealth, we are harnessing the role of sport as a development tool, supported by strengthened governance, sport integrity and the protection of human rights in sport, towards more inclusive and sustainable development.” The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth



11. In spite of this international recognition of the contribution of sports to social development, sports bodies and sport industries, on the one hand, and the development community and organisations, on the other, are still far apart from each other, and the consideration of sport does not register highly among policy-making and public sector priorities, if at all. For effective implementation of sports-based programmes strategic partnerships between these two different sectors can be an important factor.

Sport and the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG's)

12. Whilst sport has been recognised as making a valuable contribution towards development, peace and gender equality endeavours, sport is not utilised as an end in itself in programmes but as a means to an end, as the values transmitted through sport constitute the springboard for meaningful development and peace.
13. Rather than being mentioned under any specific SDG, sport is recognised in the introduction to the SDGs, as an important enabler of development, which contributes to 'the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives'. Some SDGs and their related indicators are more relevant to sports-based development actions that require stronger and better planned partnerships, such as common and long-standing efforts to address underrepresentation of groups in sport broadly links with the core 'pledge' in the 2030 Agenda that 'no one is left behind'. More specifically, attempts to develop women's participation in sport and reduce other gender disparities is related to SDG 5.1 to 'end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere' for example.
14. To achieve the ambition of the SDGs potential configurations of relationships between state and non-state actors that are relevant to sport and development have been identified (Lindsey et al, 2019). These relationships are differentiated, firstly, according to whether the desired ends of state and non-state actors may align or diverge. Where desired ends align, four 'ideal typical' approaches to implementation are identified: state centred, co-produced, complementary and non-state centred. At the other end of the spectrum, where action of state or non-state actors can detract from achieving development aims, state-led regulatory intervention or non-state led adversarial advocacy configurations are identified.

Sport and its contribution towards gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG 5)

15. Drawing from field experiences sport continues to be used at both national and local levels to address issues affecting women and girls, and support local, national and international efforts to contribute to SDG 5 and particularly to 5.1 - End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere and 5.2 - Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- i. Sport is a powerful catalyst for women and girls' empowerment, (including in situations of gender-based violence, or in conflict and post-conflict settings).
 - ii. The participation of women and girls in sports and sport-based activities helps to tackle gender stereotypes and drive societal change.
 - Good practice: in partnership with The Scottish Government, [Comic Relief](#) deliver 'Levelling the Field', a partnership which uses sport for change approaches to empower women and girls in Zambia, Malawi and Rwanda. Comic Relief invests in 11 organisations including United Purpose, British Council and Tackle Africa in Malawi who are supporting gender and equality work through sport.
 - iii. Female leadership and management is key, as female coaches become role models for young women and girls, while normalising women's empowerment with boys and men.
 - Good practice: the Arsenal and Save the Children programme using football in the Zaatari Syrian refugee camp in Jordan and working with local coaches
 - iv. Mixed-gender sports teams help to work on positive masculinities with boys and young men and prevent domestic and gender-based violence.
 - Good practice: see [Fundación Colombianitos](#) which works to empower women through girls participation and form new masculinities with boys in the activities in Colombian public schools
 - v. Gender equality in policy can and should be addressed through SDP, both in the fields of sport and in the development sector. In sport, the male domination in coaching, management and administration should be addressed, for example, in sports governing bodies and physical education in schools, as well as imbalances that exist in resourcing and media coverage, between male and female sport. In wider development policy, SDP should tackle inequalities and injustices in area such as girls' education, gender-based violence and access to sexual and reproductive health services.
 - Good practice: [Moving the Goalposts](#), an organisation using women's football in coastal Kenya, advocating for the 'back to school' policy for girls to return to school after pregnancy; (a partner of United Purpose, Tackle Africa and Laureus)
 - Good practice: Campaigns and awareness-raising about access to sanitary towels.
 - vi. Sport can give girls confidence and a voice, and also provide a safe space for women and girls to talk about issues that affect them such as gender-based violence, access to education and livelihoods, and sexual and reproductive health.
 - Good practice: [Tackle Africa](#) football-based activities to prevent FGM, HIV and promote sexual and reproductive rights

"It's good to hear boys talking about their female coaches, because when they go out to society it is mixed gender, and they have already learnt from sport about equality"

"It takes six generations to bridge the education gap but sport has been identified as a quick means of bridging this gap in the shortest possible time"

- vii. Incorporating the community in sports and sports-based activities can help to tackle gender stereotypes and prevent backlash within the household. This practice can also prevent a domestic or local backlash of the intervention.
16. In the event of involving more girls into sport and sport-based activities for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, a series of complex barriers to their participation should be considered, with adequate measures taken to overcome them. These barriers include: the age-old consideration by some that sport is a male-dominated space; local culture; family setting; religion; social norms.

Sport and its role to promote Peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16)

17. It is estimated that globally, more than 600 million young people today live in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. They are among the most affected by the multiple and often interlinked forms of violence bearing enormous and long-lasting human, social and economic costs. Amongst those are children and adolescents who now live as refugees (about 14 million in [camps or host communities](#)). Within this context, youth around the world are also experiencing what the [Global Progress Study on UNSCR 2250 on Youth Peace & Security](#) summarised as “**the violence of exclusion**”: exclusion from economic, political, social and cultural life. This is feeding into political upheavals, violent conflicts, violent crime and violent extremism. Sport itself can also have the potential to divide and cause violence, including through team rivalries.
18. However, using sports or sports-based activities can be a powerful vehicle to unite and build peace, for example addressing issues of locally-lived experiences of conflict, including ethnic and tribal, or violent crime or extremism and contribute to SDG 16 (including SDG 16.1 - To reduce all forms of violence and death from conflict).
19. Young people should be encouraged to partake in peacebuilding initiatives through sport. This can be made concrete through greater investment in youth programmes and involvement of young people in the conceptualisation and execution of sports for peace initiatives.
20. Greater efforts could also be made to support grassroot communities to address issues of structural, ethnic, political, ideological and gender-based violence through the use of sport or sport-based activities. This can be done through partnerships between external NGOs and SDP working with existing grassroot organisations, through contextualisation of peacebuilding initiatives and by adopting a participatory approach.
- Good practice: [Generations for Peace](#), set up and headquartered in Jordan, now working actively in 20 countries; [Peace Players International](#) set up in Northern Ireland through the use of basketball, now working in South Africa and elsewhere.
21. Sport can be used as a means for bridging the gap between conflicting groups. Through the organisation of intra group and inter group sporting activities, community members develop a sense of self-esteem, break barriers, stereotypes and change in the opinion they hold of the other.
- Good practice: [Fight for Peace](#) (using boxing and martial arts initiating in London and Brazil, now in partnership with the Jamaican Ministry of National Security to work in 6 districts of Kingston Jamaica to reduce violence, working in a holistic way with local communities and organisations.

“Sports for peace programmes based on the theory of change help community members change how they view themselves and how they view others in their community”

Scaling up

“Developing a global approach based on local perspectives”

22. The challenges to scaling-up SDP activities and broadening impact at national level are difficult, when small organisations are locally-led and fit the local context. It was also suggested that the SDP sector or SDP organisations could be viewed like a coupe car, which might be high-end, well-functioning, and at the cutting edge of what they do as an individual organisation, but with the means of moving only small numbers of people; whereas the ambition could be to be part of an integrated mass transit system, enabling the movement of large numbers of people travelling and thus effective at scale.
23. How to scale-up was discussed and includes a number of key elements, including involving the youth themselves, building different partnerships, for example with local or national governments, sports bodies and teams to maximise reach and impact, and the critical importance of the evaluation and identifying and using evidence-based approaches.

Involve the youth

“anything done for the youth without youth is against the youth”

24. Youth themselves are a reservoir of enormous untapped potential ready to be engaged and supported as partners and leaders in peacebuilding and development. But this opportunity is often being squandered. Too often youth are instrumentalised, securitised, treated only as economic objects, or seen as the problem. Government policies and programmes set out to do things “to” youth or “for” youth, rather than working “with” youth.
25. SDP programmes can be at the forefront of involving youth not only in their activities but in their design, running and follow up. Since whilst youth may be given opportunities to attend trainings and workshops, they also need subsequent programmatic structure to support them afterwards to turn what they have learned into effective actions delivering positive change in their communities.

Partnerships for impact and scale

26. To make a meaningful contribution towards achieving the SDGs, strong partnerships between the many different actors in this sector, including between development and sports organisations, are key to success and to the ability to work at greater scale. Strong SDP partnerships can demonstrate SDG 17 in action. In some cases, such partnerships require a major investment in infrastructure such as sports facilities, and long-term implementation plans for their efforts to be meaningful.
27. The event highlighted that partnerships with non-traditional SDP organisations are needed to scale up and achieve impact. Two key non-SDP partners were highlighted:
- Partnerships with government – taking sports’ contribution to the SDGs to scale means embedding SDP into government policy including sport policy. However, sport’s ability to impact more than physical health means that SDP work can contribute to other aspects of government policy, for example, gender related policy in education, health, development and livelihoods.
 - Good practice – EduSport (SDP organisation in Zambia, former partner of United Purpose) – has developed close relationships with ministries and has been invited into policy forums, for example on national sport policy and school PE policy.
 - Mainstreaming of SDP through partnerships with international development organisations – building partnerships with mainstream development organisations, for example working in the fields of gender (girls’ education, sexual and reproductive health, women’s entrepreneurship) and peace-building, to access larger sources of funding for scale-up.

- Good practice – the Bond SDP group’s efforts to invite and engage with British mainstream development NGOs, through meetings and surveys.

28. Many good examples of variable types of partnerships have been developed over the years, many non-state led, and between NGOs and sports organisations or federations, as evidenced through the organisations noted earlier. Equally between UN development agencies and parts of the sports sector.

- Good practice: [UNHCR and the International Olympic Committee and The Refugee Olympic Team](#); or [UNICEF and the Barca Foundation](#);
- Good practice: Comic Relief leveraged the Netball World Cup in Liverpool in July 2019 to fundraise for Sport Relief and profile the use of sport as a tool for gender empowerment. United Purpose’s girls’ [empowerment project in Malawi](#), which uses netball as a tool for gender and equality work, was profiled as part of the netball world cup.

29. It is evident that field actions by development partners and sports actors are quite dispersed, hence the need for increased collaboration. For partnerships to be successful they benefit from mutual respect and brand alignment. Understanding each other’s cultures, organisations and work is also important, and opportunities for training or secondment are recommended. It is important to understand the different approaches, for example organisations working in a complementary co-production approach, and to recognise the complexities of partnerships, for example where state-led regulation may be needed, for instance around gender equality, or where non-state organisations may need to advocate for change.

30. Strong partnerships between actors, bringing different skills and resources to a particular programme, enable partners, amongst many other benefits, to:

- gain a fresh perspective, provide inspiration for different challenges and enable problem-solving approaches;
- maximise and demonstrate SDG-oriented impact through increased understanding of frameworks and measurement tools to critique existing thinking;
- adopt and adapt successful approaches or avoiding pitfalls already made by others;
- improve capability leading to successful funding bids and awareness of new funding streams.

31. For partnerships to be successful they benefit from mutual respect and brand alignment. Understanding each other’s cultures, organisations and work is also important, and opportunities for training or secondment are recommended.

32. Sports initiatives need to be carried out in partnership with local community leaders who can provide the way into their community and facilitate the engagement of community members.

33. Up-scaling sports’ contribution to the SDG’s does not only involve reaching out to more people but also up-grading the quality of sport or sports-based activities interventions carried out in the field and ensuring that the desired development objective and change can be achieved. However, there may be a trade-off between quality and scale which needs to be recognised in scaling-up efforts.

Demonstrating impact

34. Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) is therefore a key to success for organisations using sport or sports-based activities to be able to demonstrate developmental impact and their anticipated Theory of Change.

“We need a sweet spot of shared interest in partnership’

“I have learned the power of collective impact through the partnerships we’ve created, and I’ve learned that I alone, can only do so much, but together I can do so much more with these other leaders.”

35. There is a need to continue the trend of doing more to demonstrate impact as this sector matures. Suggestions include:
 - more research and the gathering of evidence to demonstrate impact about the benefits of sport for development gains – what works and what doesn’t, and being honest about the latter; one such initiative in this area is the Bond SDP Group – an Evidence working group has begun collecting and categorising published evidence;
 - specific indicators to measure the benefits and impact of sport-based initiatives (as none of the SDG goals or targets mention sport). Various organisations have been or are developing indicators, including work initiated by the Commonwealth Secretariat and UNESCO developing and testing model indicators. This could contribute to a model indicator bank. In some cases indicators have been generated by communities through participatory processes, such as Generations for Peace, and could include self-esteem, or trauma response for example;
 - moving from the anecdotal to systematic evaluation, which will enable more evidence-based examples to be used across the sector, nationally and internationally, enhance efforts to advocate for the benefits of “in sport or through sport” and enable scale-up.
36. For the sector to move forward there is a need to create an inter-institutional community of practice on indicators and evaluation, to share and escalate good practices and avoid potential mistakes. This would also create more standardisation and co-ordination across the sector, and ultimately impact.
37. Lobbying and advocacy is needed to develop the sport for development sector, support sports-based development activities and boost sports infrastructure. Such advocacy depends on strong evidence of impact. A balance needs to be struck between using numbers, and using stories which can ‘tug at the heart’.
38. Common challenges for strategic partnerships remain, including difficulty in identifying relevant networks and potential for collaboration. Restricted resource and time, which lead to prioritisation of short-term financial or operational needs over networking and collaboration. A culture of competition rather than sharing when outside a trusted ‘community’ environment.

Conclusions and next steps

39. In order to harness the potential for sport to contribute to achieving the SDGs, participants made the following recommendations:
 - greater collaboration and coordination of efforts by States, international agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations at national and local levels. There is a lot of effort and resources put into the sports for development and peace sector, however, there is a need for more concerted and collaborative action in the field;
 - inter-institutional cooperation with the sports federations, national and local governments, mainstream development organisations and athletes is key for major transformations; in particular, to aim for SDP to be included into sport and development policies of governments, and for SDP to be mainstreamed into wider development initiatives;
 - the development of an evidence-based model as a platform for scaling up actions, going beyond an aggregate of the scaled-up individual programmes and pilots;
 - a community of best practice, indicators and evaluation approaches shared across organisations will be an invaluable contribution to building the evidence base for SDP and scaling up reach and success, enabling current and future sport-based initiatives to fulfil their wider developmental objectives;

- local partners are the heart of projects for sustainability, they are key to leave no-one behind and guarantee continuity and sustainability of projects;
- using digital platforms is key to effectively reach specific communities and track analytics to provide evidence, but it can also be considered to promote e-sports;
- promoting a “network of networks” between organisations working with sports for development. This will entail better collaboration between all actors in the field (Governments stakeholders, development partners, national and international NGOs, local organisations and community leaders). Such a network can circulate good practice, evidence and learnings, methods to sustain and scale-up, and access to funding and self-funding mechanisms;
- Ongoing Wilton Park-style events addressing other SDGs and sports contribution, for example health, education and livelihoods.

Participant commitments

Participants also made personal commitments, including:

- advocacy and awareness raising within international development sector on SDP through bond SDP group and grow membership of SDP group with mainstream development NGOs.
- share M&E tools, good practice and failure learning with wider sector.
- continue to pro-actively give away methodology to identified INGOs who can take it to scale more efficiently.
- get a weekly column in the National Press on SDP and SDG's – what it's about?
- build team capacity to support partners move beyond head-count in gender equality:
- explore our role as influencer - taking a more strategic role.
- integrate sports and development more systematically in capacity development.
- contribute to the international agenda on SDG and policies.
- promote more positive collaboration in SDP field of academic research.
- advocate and promote female participation in sport especially in local communities.
- take the discussions at Wilton Park to the 6th Sport + Peace conference in September in Cape Town.

Jean Ebot and Miguel Trancozo Treviño, Chevening scholars With input from the partner organisations and Robin Hart, Wilton Park

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