LEVERAGING SPORT TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

WWW.UNODC.ORG/SPORTS
“I am confident in my voice!”

“I am now a youth leader.”

“I make good decisions.”

“I am applying all my learned skills.”

“I have a strong sense of self-worth.”
How can sport engage youth and prevent violent extremism?

Young people are more vulnerable to recruitment and exploitation by violent extremist groups. Personal or societal isolation, feelings of injustice, marginalization and social exclusion, lack of education and employment opportunities, and exposure to radical ideologies are among the key drivers of violent extremism. At the same time, young people can be positive agents of change with the capacity to participate meaningfully as valued community members, and the United Nations has recognized their key contribution to peacebuilding efforts.

Sport has long been considered a valuable tool for fostering important human values and can be used as a tool to promote, among others, respect, teamwork, a sense of belonging and community, tolerance, diversity, and inclusion. In this context, sport can serve as an effective platform to address the ideologies and root causes of violent extremism by strategically providing a tool to create ideal conditions for learning, social participation and the meaningful and positive engagement of youth within communities. It can therefore be effective in preventing and disrupting radicalization processes and recruitment of young people by extremist groups.
5 key areas of intervention for sport to promote the prevention of violent extremism

1. **SAFE SPACES**
   involve providing youth with institutionalized protection through meaningful sport interventions, creating the conditions for harmonious personal development, providing a climate of confidence in which they may freely express their potential and strengthening their self-esteem.

2. **SOCIAL INCLUSION**
is the process of improving the terms of participation in society of disadvantaged people. Messages of celebrating unity in diversity are important and can be achieved through the aims and objectives of sport and social inclusion.

3. **EDUCATION**
enables participants of sport-based interventions to access education and learning opportunities through tailored curricula, including key life skills such as critical thinking needed to prevent violent extremism, and supports the development of long-lasting relationships with other institutions in professional networks.

4. **RESILIENCE**
is the ability to “bounce back” from setbacks and personal difficulties, drawing on one’s inner strength and interpersonal and community connections. Sport programmes aim to build the resilience of youth through various skill-building opportunities and, in turn, to increase protection against recruitment and attraction to violent extremism.

5. **EMPOWERMENT**
is a process by which youth gain agency and leadership opportunities to implement change in their own lives and the lives of others in their communities. Empowerment is seen as a crucial outcome of sport prevention of violent extremism programmes by enabling them to voice their ideas confidently and practice good decision-making.

To be truly effective and capitalize on these benefits, sport-based programmes should be applied as part of more holistic and evidence-based initiatives that address known push and pull factors of violent extremism conducive to terrorism.
Through its Youth Crime Prevention through Sport initiative, UNODC supports Member States in their efforts against violent extremism by developing technical guidance materials and building the capacity of policymakers and practitioners on the effective use of sport to address key drivers of violent extremism.

This support is guided by international frameworks such as the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, and various resolutions which emphasize the key role that young people play in crime prevention and peacebuilding efforts.
UNODC TECHNICAL GUIDE ON PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM THROUGH SPORT

Developed in consultation with international experts and other United Nations entities, including UNESCO and UN DESA, this Guide provides comprehensive recommendations on how sport and sport-based programmes can be effectively used to prevent violent extremism and form part of comprehensive responses and interventions that aim to engage young people. It provides guidance on policy development, programme design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of sport-based interventions, adopting a holistic, multidisciplinary approach. Interwoven through the Guide are five areas of intervention considered key to addressing push and pull factors to violent extremism through sport: safe spaces, social inclusion, empowerment, education and resilience.

UNODC PRACTICAL GUIDE ON PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM THROUGH SPORT

This Practical Guide aims to support coaches and other facilitators of sport-based programmes in preparing and delivering sport interventions focused on key messages and learning opportunities for preventing violent extremism. It contains concepts, resources, step-by-step activities and practical tips which practitioners can apply in creating contextually relevant, safe and inclusive sport-based sessions conducted as part of comprehensive strategies for preventing violent extremism.

UNODC E-LEARNING COURSE ON PVE THROUGH SPORT

This UNODC online learning tool, based on the comprehensive Technical Guide, introduces participants to key concepts related to violent extremism and explains how sport can be used in addressing push and pull factors of violent extremism among youth. It includes interactive graphs, self-reflection exercises and thematic videos by experts which provide insights into key concepts and programming principles. The e-course may complement in-person trainings, policy workshops and other capacity building activities on the topic offered by UNODC. The course is made available through the UNODC e-learning platform in multiple languages. Access to the e-course is administered by UNODC upon request.
Sports (...) and physical activity have the power to change perceptions, prejudices and behaviours, as well as to inspire people, break down racial and political barriers, combat discrimination and defuse conflict.

73/1. POLITICAL DECLARATION
ADOPTED AT THE NELSON MANDELA PEACE SUMMIT

For further information, please visit the UNODC Youth Crime Prevention through Sport website: www.unodc.org/sports
YOUTH CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH SPORT