

STATEMENT FROM THE ISCA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

23 OCTOBER 2010, FRANKFURT AM MAIN

The grassroots sport sector is the pulse of sport and physical activity. Grassroot sport is the sector which mobilizes the most citizens in sport, which recruits and educates the most volunteers and is the financial backbone of the sport sector either as producer of activities or consumer of services and products.

The ISCA General Assembly calls for higher ambitions for Sport for All in order to capitalize the full potential of the Sport for All sector as the largest civil society actor in the world.

Access to sport and physical activity varies significantly across the world. It means we see a huge gap between the most physically active populations and the least physically active populations.

In the European Union 27 countries alone, closure of this gap between societies with the highest and lowest participation in sport and physical activity would result in at least 100 million more active citizens. Closing this gap would be a valuable achievement when knowing that physical inactivity alone is causing 10% of deaths in Europe. Closing this gap will provide higher quality of life and stimulate the economy with approximately €50 billion alone in household spending.

We call for visions and initiatives to increase the access to grassroots sport and physical activity for the hundreds of millions of citizens worldwide who are not yet regularly physical active. This should be our common goal.

To reach this goal, we must innovate, develop and invest in the sport and physical activity sector. We must specifically invest in the three core pillars of grassroots sport:

- Public funding and investment in grassroots sport
- Development and access to engaging facilities and activities
- Recruitment, training and support of volunteers

Invest in citizens and civil society

- View and value public funding to the grassroots sport sector as an investment, which is multiplied by the volunteer work and pays off in higher quality of life, social cohesion and reduced health care costs.
- Ensure public funding by creating legal provisions and sustainable funding systems, thus motivating the public sector to support physical activity (health, outdoor/urban planning, education, transport)
- Establish fiscal incitements animating the private sector to establish sponsorship and corporate social responsibility based funding to grass-root sport
- Establish fiscal incitement stimulating increased household spending on sport and physical activity

Invest in facilities for grassroots sport and physical activity

- Ensure public funding and establish a new public-private financial model for investing in grass-root sport facilities.
- Increase the utilization of existing public and private facilities by creating flexible access.
- Motivate cross-sector cooperation in facility development among e.g. architects, urban planners and nature managers.

Invest in volunteers for the benefit of society

Voluntary work is an important resource of the grassroots sport sector. In some continents volunteers are the most important resource for sport. It is estimated that a large part of the sport sector would not exist without volunteers. Seven percent of the Europeans or 35 million citizens are volunteering in sport, according to a Commission initiated study (2010).

Volunteers are multipliers – both financially and activity wise. Volunteers are a committed and inexpensive resource for societies. Besides giving one's time and personal resources to other citizens by volunteering, the volunteers themselves also develop their knowledge and skills through practice and personal non-formal and informal education processes – this is indeed Life Long Learning on a mass scale.

- Remove barriers which complicate doing volunteer work
- Recognize and give credit for voluntary work in education and employment
- Support education programs and education systems for volunteers in grass-root sport

Conclusions: Engage in committing partnerships for societal benefit – and MOVE!

The societal challenges related to health, social inclusion and sustainable development cannot be overcome by the grass-root sport sector alone. **Strategic partnerships are needed.** We call upon all related sectors – from public, commercial and civil society organizations - to engage in such committing and long-term partnerships. At the same time, **we commit ourselves and our organizations** to think “out of the box” of sport for all associations. We commit to directing our attention and resources towards fulfilling societal goals in cross-cutting partnerships.

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Organizations with the primary goal to develop the grassroots sport sector - to create Sport for All - met at the 16th ISCA General Assembly in Frankfurt am Main, Germany on 23 October, 2010.