

ATINER CONFERENCE PRESENTATION SERIES No: SPO2016-0059

**ATINER's Conference Paper Proceedings Series**

SPO2016-0059

Athens, 25 April 2018

**Mega Sporting Events (MSEs) and Decent Work Agenda:  
Implementing Labour Rights and Developing Skills**

Giovanni di Cola

Athens Institute for Education and Research

8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10683 Athens, Greece

ATINER's conference paper proceedings series are circulated to promote dialogue among academic scholars. All papers of this series have been blind reviewed and accepted for presentation at one of ATINER's annual conferences according to its acceptance policies (<http://www.atiner.gr/acceptance>).

© All rights reserved by authors.

**ATINER's Conference Paper Proceedings Series**

SPO2016-0059

Athens, 25 April 2018

ISSN: 2529-167X

Giovanni di Cola (PhD), Special Adviser, ILO, Italy

**Mega Sporting Events (MSEs) and Decent Work Agenda:  
Implementing Labour Rights and Developing Skills**

**ABSTRACT**

The article will focus on Decent Work Agenda (DWA) items that are relevant for Mega Sporting Events (MSEs) in particular the development of competencies and skills and labour rights also in the perspective of the Olympic Agenda 2020. It suggests practical approaches and research actions to be developed in partnerships with university networks, candidate cities and relevant sport institutions.

Keywords: Mega Sporting Events; Labour Rights; Decent Work Agenda and Declaration on Fundamental Rights at Work, Skills development in sporting events, Olympic 2020 Agenda and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## **MSEs and Decent Work Agenda**

Mega Sports Events (MSEs) have become increasingly important as they are major business events, reaching out to global audiences involving support teams, construction and transportation and services. They constitute, therefore, an opportunity to ensure decent working conditions for the thousands workers involved, directly or indirectly in them, by:

- a) Promoting decent jobs and skills throughout the process of candidature, organization and legacy;
- b) Respecting fundamental workers' rights and relevant labour standards;
- c) Extending social protection for all;
- d) Promoting social dialogue and implementing mechanisms of mediation and conflict resolution.

The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted by the ILO in 1998 is of paramount importance to achieve sustainable MSEs. In fact, by the very fact of their ILO membership, all Member States endorse the rights and principles contained in the Declaration and core conventions, which are related to, namely:

- a) Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- b) The elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;
- c) The effective abolition of child labour; and
- d) The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

The aim, among others, of the ILO Declaration (1998), is to provide technical assistance to Member States that may be in need of upgrading their labour legislation and other conventions and policy related areas.

Candidate cities should be able to systematically include the provision of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at work in their bids so that Member States can report on its implementation.

As part of the Olympic Agenda 2020, the overall capacity of all candidate cities should be enhanced, even if by the end of the two years screening process, only one will be retained.

As a result of the above developments and as it can be noted, collaboration embedded in both the ILO Declaration and in the IOC Agenda 2020, could be fostered throughout the entire Olympic process from candidacy to organization and legacy.

## **MSEs and Skills Development**

Another aspect that could be boosted through sporting events also related to MSEs Processes is the development of competences and skills through sports.

The above approach could be applied to training programmes for volunteers, athletes, coaches and sport managers as well as local development officials involved in MSEs Preparation and delivery.

ILO research on youth skills through sport pointed at the: a) importance of soft and employability skills in MSEs and b) quality of such skills for labour market entrance. Both soft and employability skills could be enhanced in MSEs, if they were systematically better framed and usefully recognized.

So far, the opportunity for developing skills for employability in sport is largely under-utilized. As indicated for example the training programmes for volunteers are not projecting the beneficiaries into the labour market. The cost opportunity of such training programmes could indeed be more effective if greater attention was given to: a) the MSEs process and b) the development of skills through sport resulting from it.

One could easily imagine the positive results of empowering young people by explaining the importance of skills acquired through MSEs at the beginning, during and after the events. So far such exercise it is often carried out at the end of a sporting event. It was done with volunteers in Baku European Games in 2015 at the end of the event.

It could instead be done in three phases and include the good initiatives of a few National Olympic Committees delivering a Passport of the Volunteer, that certify the acquired skills and which should be used to bridge over to labour market and skills projection requirements and mapping.

In order to give power to such training initiatives they should be linked to secondary and tertiary education systems and academies and they should work together to achieve sustainable outcomes of decent job opportunities for all.

## **Research Actions for Skills Development and Implementation of Labour Standards in MSEs**

Given the above, two research actions could be carried out in partnership with relevant sport federations and university networks such as the ATINER network and the ILO.

*Topic 1: Evaluation of the Impact of Developing Skills and Competences in Sporting Events*

### **Background and Justification**

ILO has in previous training and research found that skills can be developed in sports and that skills for employability have a greater potential through sporting events than in other form of training (i.e. vocational or on the job training).

The above correlation is not yet integrated in sport training development programmes which are mainly oriented to cover sport management and physical education.

Indeed, there is a need to use sport skills as a multiplier of skills for employability reaching out to labour market opportunities (beyond sport related activities).

A new training course proposal on developing skills in sport is under preparation with local development and university partners by the ILO to be rolled out in various campuses and through internet.

### Development

Evidence based underpinning the need to pilot such skills development training programme(s) could focus on:

- a) Sporting events as a cluster of services and skills;
- b) Value chains (institutional and economics);
- c) Training gaps in all occupations related to sport clusters.
- d) Best practices in developing skills.

### *Topic 2: Evaluation of the Socio Economic Impact of Sporting Clusters and Implementation of Labour Standards*

### Background and Justification

There is increasing concern about the implementation of labour standards in sporting events.

In this respect and in order to develop a long term strategy, there is a need to review sport clusters given the adoption of IOC Agenda 2020 and of the Sustainable Development Goals towards 2030 and the fact that they both contribute to achieve sustainable development.

Last but not least there is a need to review the documentation related to bids and contracts to be in line with international labour standards and in particular to the ILO Declaration of 1998 on Fundamental Rights at work.

### Development

The research action could therefore focus on:

- a) Identifying useful links between sport and development agendas (IOC, ILO and other UN agencies);
- b) Reviewing questionnaires and contracts used by International Sports Federations (ISFs) to award sport bids and proposing changes to enhance policy coherence and effective implementation of labour standards;
- c) Identifying gaps (policies, legislation and other procedures) and proposing ways to full-fill those gaps.

## Conclusions

Given recent developments in the adoption of Global Agendas, new space for research developing skills for sustainable sporting events can be developed.

The International Community through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, on one side, and the IOC with the adoption of the IOC Agenda 2020, on the other, have stepped up to create a bridge between values and standards for sustainable development.

ILO has developed tools such as the Declaration of 1998 which could be largely used to connect labour standards and skills development in sporting events.

Sport and Tourism University network such as IRNIST has the capacity and the responsibility to propose a new model which may create innovative training courses and master programmes linking skills to labour market opportunities beyond the traditional sport management and physical education approaches.

## References

- ILO Decent Work Agenda(1996-2016) <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--en/index.htm>
- ILO (1998) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work <http://www.ilo.org/declaration/lang--en/index.htm>
- UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015) <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals>
- Olympic Agenda 2020 [http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Olympic\\_Agenda\\_2020/Olympic\\_Agenda\\_2020-20-20\\_Recommendations-ENG.pdf](http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Olympic_Agenda_2020/Olympic_Agenda_2020-20-20_Recommendations-ENG.pdf)
- Giovanni di Cola edited by (2006) "Beyond the Score Board. Youth employment and skills development in the sports sector." ILO, Geneva, See in particular "Identifying Jobs , Core and Soft Skills for Employability, Ch. 14, pp. 173-192
- G. di Cola, avec C. Costa, C. Bellony et B. Loze (2008), Travail Décent, Développement local et Sport, ILO, Geneva.
- Institute for Human Rights and Business, (2013), Striving for Excellence: Mega Sporting Events and Human Rights. [http://www.ihrb.org/pdf/2013-10-21\\_IHRB\\_Mega-Sporting-Events-Paper\\_Web.pdf](http://www.ihrb.org/pdf/2013-10-21_IHRB_Mega-Sporting-Events-Paper_Web.pdf)