

# An Olympic Mosaic

Multidisciplinary Research and Dissemination of Olympic Studies  
CEO-UAB: 20 Years

## Editors

Emilio Fernández Peña  
Berta Cerezuela  
Miquel Gómez Benosa  
Chris Kennett  
Miquel de Moragas Spà



Centre d'Estudis Olímpics  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona



Ajuntament de Barcelona

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# Educational Dimension of the Olympic Games

**Berta Cerezuela**

**Head of Projects and the Documentation Service, CEO-UAB**

Education, along with history, is possibly one of the most prevalent subject areas in Olympic literature. Over the 20-year period since it was set up, CEO-UAB has carried out several research projects, both theoretical and applied, on education. These studies have ranged from preparing teaching materials for use in schools and universities to international research.

Two of the main contributions in the research field have been those commissioned by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The first of these, *Networking in Olympic Studies*, was applied research into the possibility of setting up a collaborative network in the field of Olympic studies, and was carried out between May 2004 and February 2005 (Moragas et al. 2005). The second study which was part of the IOC's *Olympic Values Education Programme*, consisted of a study of the various Olympic values education initiatives promoted by institutions that belong to the Olympic Movement, and was carried out between April 2006 and May 2008 (Moragas et al. 2008).

This article aims to offer an overview of the phenomenon of Olympic education. An in-depth analysis will be made of the education programmes promoted as part of an edition of the Olympic Games as a consequence of a CEO-UAB contribution in the field of education and Olympism. First, we shall consider the concept of 'Olympic education', its limitations, and the kind of activities that it includes. Second, we shall go on to identify the main actors that promote education initiatives within the Olympic Movement. Third, we shall provide a historical overview and an analysis of the initiatives promoted as part of the Olympic Games<sup>40</sup>. Finally, we shall consider the contribution made by universities to Olympic education.

## 1. Olympic education

As pointed out by the IOC, the relationship between education and Olympism includes two main categories. The first is academic research into Olympism and the second is teaching through Olympism (children, adolescents and athletes) (IOC 2009). This distinction, based mainly on the scope of application and the carrying out of activities, can also be identified by the terms 'Olympic studies' and 'Olympic education', which are widely used in Olympic literature.

The term 'Olympic studies' refers to activities carried out in universities in the academic world, which consist of research into, training in and the dissemination of the Olympic phenomenon, whereas 'Olympic education' is one of the most commonly used terms when talking of Olympic philosophy, of Olympism, and is part of a long tradition in the Olympic Movement. It refers to activities aimed at actively promoting Olympic values.

There is no widely accepted definition of 'Olympic education', a concept which includes a wide range of activities. According to the directives set out by the Foundation of Olympic and Sport Education (FOSE), the aims of Olympic education are:

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40. This section was based on the text published in Cerezuela and Correa (2007).



- To enrich the human spirit through Olympic education and sport, combined with culture, which is understood to be a lifelong experience.
- To develop a sense of human solidarity, tolerance and mutual respect associated with fair play.
- To promote peace, mutual understanding, respect between cultures, protection of the environment, which are basic human values and concerns, in their regional and national context.
- To promote excellence and achievements according to the fundamental principles of the Olympic Movement.
- To develop a sense of continuity of civilization as in the history of the ancient and modern Olympic Games.

According to Binder (2004), in practice, the reality of Olympic education is about ‘how’ educators can help young people develop Olympic values.

Our studies in this field have enabled us to establish a classification of the activities that can be grouped under the heading of ‘Olympic education’ and are directed at children and young people of school age, and at the educators in charge of carrying them out. The classification includes:

- Artistic and cultural activities: competitions (art, literature, etc.), exhibitions or other programmes for young people.
- Sports activities: festivals, competitions and sports events for young people.
- Academic activities: activities of an academic nature (talks, workshops, seminars, courses, etc.) to raise awareness and knowledge of Olympic topics among teachers, students and athletes.
- Educational content: content with defined and explicit teaching aims, in various formats (books, audiovisual materials, posters, exhibition boards, websites, etc.) directed at teachers, students and athletes.
- Multi-activity programmes: programmes that include a variety of activities (art competitions, educational materials, sports competitions, etc.) designed as a single unit.

## 2. Education initiatives in the Olympic Movement

As declared by Jacques Rogge, President of the IOC, at the opening ceremony of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Forum on Sport, Education and Culture held in Beijing in October 2006, “the Olympic Movement is above all an educational Movement”. The Olympic Movement, established by the pedagogue Pierre de Coubertin at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has defined its policies on education and culture, based on the fundamental principles set out in the Olympic Charter, which regulates its activities.

These principles define Olympism as “a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles” (IOC 2007, 11). These principles also define the Olympic Movement’s goal of “contributing to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practised in accordance with Olympism and its values” (IOC 2007, 11).

The IOC based its educational and cultural policies on these principles and includes, as one of its objectives, the promotion of Olympic education and support for institutions promoting Olympic values (IOC 2009).

Today, the following institutions in the Olympic Movement can be highlighted for their connection with activities in the field of Olympic education: the IOC; National Olympic Committees (NOCs), mainly through their National Olympic Academies

(NOAs), and Organising Committees (OCOGs). It is also worth noting the increasing role played by Olympic sponsors in Olympic education programmes or in their own programmes, as well as the role of organisations recognised by the IOC for their activities in the field of education and dissemination of Olympic values and fair play, particularly the International Olympic Academy (IOA) and the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee (CIPC).

The IOC itself has promoted programmes and activities that contribute to raising awareness of the role of Olympic education, such as international forums on sport, education and culture, as well as educational activities such as art and literature competitions or Youth Camps associated with an Olympic Games. These activities are carried out in association with entities such as the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, the IOA and UNESCO.

The IOC is currently working on a new initiative in Olympic education; the *Olympic Values Education Programme* (OVEP). It is an IOC global strategy for teaching Olympic values to young people and which aims to “maintain young people’s interest in sport, encouraging them to practise sport and promoting the Olympic values” (IOC 2008). The programme includes three elements: the manual *Teaching values*, “a reference document for all teachers and educators looking to promote the values of Olympism” (IOC 2008); an interactive database with detailed information on Olympic education programmes and tools, and a label which “should encourage teachers and educators around the world to move into teaching the Olympic values” (IOC 2008).

As described by Landry and Yerlès (1996), the institutionalisation of Olympic education began with the creation of the International Olympic Institute in Berlin in 1938, a forerunner of the International Olympic Academy created in Athens in 1961, which played an important role in promoting Olympic education during the 1960s and particularly in the creation of National Olympic Academies, which acted as the education arm of National Olympic Committees.

According to the Olympic Charter, the role of National Olympic Committees is “to promote the fundamental principles and values of Olympism in their countries, in particular, in the fields of sport and education, by promoting Olympic education programmes in all levels of schools, sports and physical education institutions and universities, as well as by encouraging the creation of institutions dedicated to Olympic education, such as National Olympic Academies, Olympic Museums [...]” (IOC 2007, 61).

The main activities promoted by National Olympic Committees in the field of Olympic education aimed at schools include educational content, artistic and cultural activities, sports competitions and academic activities.

In the field of education, the main activities consist in developing educational materials and promoting the inclusion of Olympic teaching materials in the school curriculum. The format of the teaching materials is very varied and ranges from materials adapted to the curriculum and educational books, mainly aimed at teachers, to information posters or educational games. Most of these materials are distributed to schools all over the country.

Artistic and cultural activities, which include a range of competitions including art, sculpture, photography and literature, are a way for students to express their experiences of sport or the Olympic Games through art.

The aims of the sports competitions are to raise awareness about fair play and the values of competition, to improve health through sport and to promote sport and Olympic sports for school-age children.

Many of these initiatives in schools are multi-activity programmes, sometimes organised as an Olympic Day, that include art competitions, educational materials and sports competitions, among others.

Academic activities are also organised to increase students’ knowledge about Olympic topics. These include talks, conferences, classes, seminars, films and the setting up of Olympic clubs in schools. Some of these activities are aimed at teachers as an introduction to Olympic topics and the teaching methodology for this curricular content.

Sponsors of the Olympic Games, even though they are the main partners in the Olympic Movement in terms of funding and disseminating the 'Olympic Games' brand, have very little involvement in promoting Olympic values through education initiatives (Rezende 2008).

Their involvement is mainly by way of collaborations, either as co-organisers or funders, with OCOGs, NOCs, government bodies and other local partners. Although limited in number, there are examples of education programmes initiated by a company sponsoring the Olympics, such as the *McDonald's Champion Kids* programme that was organised for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. These initiatives consist of arts and cultural activities and educational content.

As stated earlier, the IOC supports other institutions in promoting the dissemination of Olympic values. One notable institution is the International Olympic Academy, an entity that has played a key role in promoting Olympic education. Landry and Yerlès (1996) describe it as the guardian of the Olympic conscience by means of its largely academic activities aimed at educators. According to Moragas et al. (2005, 153), it has become the spiritual home of Olympism in modern times, which "provides a unique opportunity for students, academics, athletes, artists and officials from all over the world to exchange ideas and share this 'state of mind' in Ancient Olympia" (IOA 2009).

Another noteworthy example of an institution recognised by the IOC for its work in the field of Olympic education is the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee (CIPC) created in 1975 and comprising more than 30 National Committees. The CIPC, through its activities, promotes the study and teaching of Olympic philosophy. Among the educational activities that it promotes, the international network of Pierre de Coubertin schools is worth highlighting, which involves schools in 58 countries that offer an education for young people based on the philosophy of the Olympic spirit.

### **3. Olympic Games Organising Committees**

In the declaration made at the 5<sup>th</sup> World Forum on Sport, Education and Culture, the efforts made by the OCOGs to set up educational and cultural programmes was recognised. In the opening ceremony of this forum, the IOC President highlighted that "sports events such as the Olympic Games are ideal platforms to inform and educate", and that their educational impact could have an effect on the world's population, particularly on young people, who are the future of the Olympic Movement.

In spite of the potential impact, the Olympic Charter does not assign any educational responsibilities to Organising Committees beyond the option to organise Youth Camps. According to regulation 48 of the Olympic Charter, "With the authorisation of the IOC Executive Board, the OCOG may, under its own responsibility, organise an international Youth Camp on the occasion of the Olympic Games" (IOC 2007, 96). However, the recent questionnaires for the candidate cities for the Olympic Summer Games in 2016 included a question about education initiatives that would be put in place.

But, what exactly is an education programme in an Olympic Games? Various attempts have been made to define such initiatives. Our research has contributed a possible definition of education programmes in an Olympic Games. According to Cerezuela and Correa (2007, 7), an education programme in an Olympic Games comprises a structured set of actions, activities and/or cultural, sports and educational publications, led by an Organising Committee, which can involve collaboration with other partners and which is strictly connected with an edition of the Olympic Games. The programme should have clearly defined objectives, be aimed at a particular audience and in a particular geographical area, and be implemented over a defined period. This definition also complements other existing, more content-based definitions.

#### **3.1. Historical overview**

The development and implementation of education programmes in connection with an edition of the Olympic Games have neither been consistent nor continuous.

As already mentioned, Youth Camps are the only educational activities explicitly mentioned in the Olympic Charter. Since the first Youth Camp was held as part of the Stockholm Olympic Games in 1918, they have not been a regular event. However, according to Eleftheriou, they have now become a firm tradition within the Olympic Games' programme of activities. The aim of the Youth Camps is "for young people, representing almost every nation in the world, to come together every four years in conjunction with the Olympic Games to develop skills and knowledge that relate to the Olympic Movement" (2003, 387). Youth Camps, therefore, provide an opportunity for young people from participating countries to enjoy the Games firsthand, and at the same time, take part in sports, cultural and recreational activities, discover the host city and experience the local culture.

In addition to Youth Camps, various education initiatives have been incorporated into the Olympic Games activities programme. As described by Binder (2003), the inclusion of a formal education programme as part of the activities carried out by OCOGs dates back to the Olympic Summer Games of Montreal'76 with the programme: *Promotion of Olympism in the School System*.

Initiatives prior to the Montreal'76 Games were ad hoc isolated events that lacked any continuity in subsequent editions of the Games. They were included in the cultural programme and did not receive direct support from the Organising Committees. Examples of this are provided by the official educational activities that were part of the Tokyo'64 and Sapporo'72 Games, which were promoted by actors outside the Organising Committee. According to Masumoto (2006), the education initiatives for Tokyo'64 were promoted nationally by the Ministry for Education in collaboration with the NOC and other private organisations. As a result of this initiative, four manuals were published for primary and secondary school children in Japan about Olympic-related topics, which were distributed over the four years leading up to the Games (1961-1964). Another education initiative included as part of an Olympic Games' cultural programme was the International Art Competition for children and young people that was held during the Munich'72 Olympic Games and which Landry and Yerlès (1996) identified as the first structured Olympic education initiative.

Therefore, the education programme for the Montreal'76 Olympic Games marked a turning point in the development of education programmes in the Olympic Games and established a framework for the future. The programme was the initiative of an association of physical education teachers which was supported by the Quebec Ministry for Education and by the Organising Committee, and implemented over the four years leading up to the Olympics (1972-1976), reaching more than 1.2 million students in the province of Quebec (Landry and Desjardins 1977). The programme included a series of educational materials aimed at schools based on Olympic values, sport and socioeducational and cultural activities, such as art competitions, sports festivals and educational guides.

According to Perelman (1985), the Los Angeles'84 Games marked a radical change in relation to previous Games by not organising a Youth Camp and by focusing efforts on a programme that would leave a legacy. The four-year programme (1981-1984), was aimed at all schoolchildren of all levels in the southern California area and it was funded by means of sponsorship. The programme included three kinds of activities: cultural, educational and sports.

Another Olympic Games' education programme that should be considered as a point of reference was that of the Calgary'88 Winter Games. The Education and Youth Department of the Organising Committee set out three large focus areas: education, culture and information, and their activities reached 1,700 schools in the province of Calgary and 13,500 across Canada. One noteworthy activity that this department organised was a series of three educational kits, developed by a team of more than 200 voluntary teachers, aimed at all levels of education. The materials included various approaches to learning (comprehension, analysis, evaluation, etc.) and used Olympic-related content to develop concepts that were part of the school curriculum (Binder 2003).

Whereas the Calgary'88 education programme can be considered as a point of reference, Seoul'88 and Barcelona'92 are two examples of Organising Committees that chose not to assign importance to the inclusion of educational activities in their

programmes, either in the run up, or during the Olympic Games. However, the post-Games' education programme promoted by the Barcelona Olympic Foundation is worthy of mention.

The Albertville'92 Olympic Winter Games provide another example of an education programme that aimed to leave a legacy. The *Ecolympique* programme promoted by the Organising Committee, the Ministry for Education, Youth and Sport and the company Candia was aimed at schoolchildren aged 8 to 12 all over France. The programme developed curricular materials about historical aspects of the Olympic Games and about socioeconomic and geographical aspects of the Savoie region of France.

The following Lillehammer'94 Games offered another example of an education programme on a national scale with a clear environmental education component. The programme, promoted by the Organising Committee, the national television broadcaster (NRK), the NOC and regional education authorities, consisted in developing educational materials.

The education programme developed for the Atlanta'96 Olympic Games comprised four major programmes that were implemented through the state of Georgia education system and was aimed at all levels of schoolchildren. Of the activities organised, particularly worthy of mention is the programme of Olympic Days in schools that was implemented over the seven years leading up to the Games (1989-1996), which included a wide range of activities: curricular guides, seminars for teachers, poster competitions, welcome programmes, etc. Atlanta'96 was also the first example of an Organising Committee that made educational material available on the Internet, even though they were for information only.

At the Nagano'98 Winter Games, of the educational activities promoted, the partnering programme *One School, One Country* based on the Hiroshima Asian Games initiative can be highlighted. The programme was so successful that it was implemented at the subsequent Games of Sydney 2000, Salt Lake City 2002 and Torino 2006.

The Sydney 2000 National Education Programme stands out for how it managed to reach more than 3 million students aged 3 to 18 across Australia. The programme consisted of three main initiatives: *O-news*, an education and information initiative; *Aspire*, an educational kit for primary and secondary schoolchildren; and *Kids*, the education section on the Sydney 2000 official website, which offered educational and recreational activities, as well as information about the programme.

At the Salt Lake City 2002 Winter Games, the education programme consisted of a series of very diverse activities which included educational materials, reward programmes, art and music programmes, sports activities, a twinning programme, community services and participation programmes. Even though the activities were aimed at schools in the Utah region, the website set up for the programme (<http://2002.uen.org>) made it available to an international audience and continued after the Games had ended, thereby constituting an information legacy of the Games.

The Athens 2004 Organising Committee paid particular attention to developing an education programme that would set the benchmark for future editions of the Olympic Games. The programme consisted of various activities that included, among others, educational activities in various languages, classes in schools, art and drama competitions, and an interactive website, *Youth 2004*. The programme developed for the Athens 2004 Games was recommended by the European Commission (in the Athens Declaration) for implementation in schools in other member countries.

The Torino 2006 Olympic Winter Games provided an example of an Olympic Games' education programme that had the potential to become a point of reference for the development of future programmes. The contents of the programme, which were arranged in five broad subject areas (sport and health; sport and sports culture; sport, science, technology and communication; sport and the environment; and sport, intercultural interaction, law and human rights), were delivered using school education packs, the interactive website, *Kids Village*, and activity programmes such as School in Movement and Mathematics Winter Olympiads.

In the recent Beijing 2008 Summer Games, the corresponding education programme set a milestone in the history of Olympic education. The programme was implemented in more than 400,000 schools across China, reaching more than 400 million schoolchildren. The programme, which integrated Olympic education into the school curriculum, was promoted by the Bei-

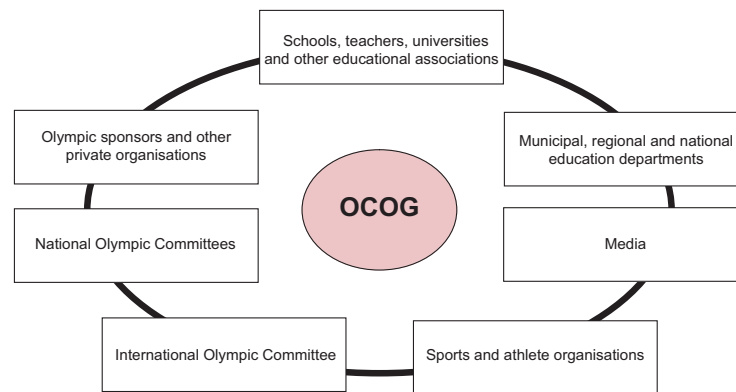
ing Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG), the Chinese Ministry for Education and the Chinese Olympic Committee. The activities included a twinning programme with schools in other countries, which was expected to continue after the Games ended, and the creation of model schools in Olympic education (Ren 2009).

### 3.2. Main features

From an organisational viewpoint, one of the key factors for Organising Committees when developing Olympic education programmes is to have a dedicated unit within the organisational structure for educational activities, which takes on a cross-disciplinary role within the organisational framework of the Games. Education was not fully incorporated into the Organising Committees until the Los Angeles'84 Olympic Games.

With regard to collaboration between institutions, the type of partners involved in the development of education programmes throughout history has varied greatly, as shown in Chart 1, but the Organising Committee has always played a central role.

**Chart 1: Actor typologies**



Source: Cerezuela and Correa 2007, 7

Torino 2006 was the first example of an Olympic Games where the IOC was directly involved in education programmes, with activities including school visits to the Olympic Museum in Lausanne. NOCs have always been involved at a national level, in some cases significantly, such as at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, whose programme was based on an earlier initiative of the Australian Olympic Committee.

Other main partners in programmes are the education authorities and the teaching staff who see hosting the Olympic Games as an opportunity to integrate the event into the curriculum. The role of Ministries of Education should be highlighted, as they ensure the national implementation of programmes and their continuity beyond the Games themselves. The Albertville'92 education programme provides an example of this.

Other partners involved in these activities are sports organisations that identify an opportunity to promote sport in their region, the media and sponsors. Results show that sponsors in The Olympic Partner (TOP) programme are less involved in these activities than local sponsors, who seem to have a greater interest in education programmes.



In terms of their format and aims, education programmes have three main aims: to inform, to promote participation and to educate. Through various actions, information is provided about the event and young people are encouraged to get involved by making it easier for them to attend events or to become volunteers. These aims, focused more on the Olympic Games themselves, are complemented by the overall aim of educating young people in Olympic and sporting values. Over the years, the aim of educating has taken over from the aim of merely informing. One of the factors that has spurred this change has been the development of educational materials adapted to the school curriculum that allow Olympic and sports-related topics to be introduced into various subjects and new skills development.

In order to achieve these aims, programmes are structured into an articulated collection of cultural, sports and educational activities, including curriculum guides, complementary educational materials, art and cultural competitions, sports activities, school twinning programmes, festivals, Olympic Days and Olympic Youth Camps.

Programmes are aimed mainly at primary and secondary schoolchildren, although the age group varies according to the activities and each edition of the Olympic Games. In addition, programmes are aimed mainly at local level, though some are rolled out at regional or national level depending on the partners involved, particularly in the case of national education authorities or the respective NOC. This is also reflected in the language of the materials produced which, in general, are published only in the official language of the Olympic host country. This local approach to educational activities clashes with an increasing globalisation and internationalisation of the Olympic Movement.

The Internet became a communication channel at the Olympic Games in Atlanta'96, and it has also had an impact on educational activities. Use of the Internet has evolved from being purely informative at Atlanta'96 to being interactive at London 2012. Internet use has improved, but it has yet to reach its full potential in terms of extending programmes to an international audience.

Finally, we would like to refer to legacy. One of the main aims of Olympic education is to create a legacy for the community hosting the Olympic Games and for the Olympic Movement. Although the majority of programmes made reference to a legacy in their aims, only a small number of programmes planned for their continuity and an even smaller number continued once the Games had ended. Furthermore, there are very few examples of activities that have bridged more than one Olympic Games.

The Busan Action Plan, which resulted from the 6<sup>th</sup> World Forum on Sport, Education and Culture, identified the main opportunities for improvement in combining sport, culture and Olympic education. One of the opportunities is the need for education programmes to reach a wider international audience, in particular countries that are less able to develop their own programmes, and also for activities to be ongoing and not limited to the duration of an Olympic Games. The plan also mentions the need to include these activities in the IOC's Transfer of Knowledge Programme.

## 5. Conclusions

The importance of Olympic education, at the heart of the Olympic Movement, has grown in recent years, as evidenced by the IOC's policies on culture and education for young people, by the greater importance given to educational activities when evaluating the success of an Olympic Games, and by the number and quality of national initiatives promoted by NOCs and other institutions recognised by the Olympic Movement.

The contributions made to this field by universities can be very enriching for those universities and for the Olympic Movement alike. First, universities should be considered as an excellent platform for carrying out theoretical and applied research on Olympic education and, in particular, their pedagogical implementation in schools. Second, universities can contribute to educational content and to innovation in teaching methodologies. Finally, universities in the Olympic host countries can play a key role in developing and implementing education programmes for the Olympic Games and in promoting Olympic values.

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