



## KAVEH'S STORY...

### **Why and how did you decide to become a Champion for Peace?**

After the 2008 Beijing Olympics I began to seek opportunities to help others feel the same way I did about sport, especially people from less advantaged parts of the world. I was the first badminton player from West Asia to qualify for the Olympic Games and it was an amazing experience. I felt that all the hard work had paid off and it opened my eyes. Although I am not a World Champion, I can still help other people become a pro athlete or bring a smile to the faces of kids who follow the sport – and that's why I became a Champion for Peace.

### **What appealed to you about the Haiti project?**

I was checking the news on Peace and Sport about the tragedy in Haiti and noticed they were looking at different opportunities to collect equipment or raise money. In the Haiti Olympic Committee's letter to Peace and Sport, badminton was one of the sports they mentioned so that got me thinking. I had lost family members to the Iran earthquake 20 year ago so I have been close enough to such an event to imagine how it might feel. My goal for the kids in Haiti is just to bring a smile to their faces, which would be a big achievement in itself.

### **How did you engage with your sport in the '1,000 rackets for Haiti' project?**

I live in Denmark and I used my network of friends, clubs and federations to get the

badminton community involved. Some of the athletes in Champions for Peace have very high profiles but I believe that we all have a lot of connections in our sports. For example, I was able to contact all the clubs in Denmark and whenever I called people, I received very positive feedback. People generally have a lot of respect for athletes so when I described what I was doing with Peace and Sport they were more than happy to help. We also managed to set up an auction to sell the 2010 European Championship gold medal won by the five-times European badminton champion Peter Gade. He's not only a badminton legend, but a friend, and when I talked to him about our project he offered to donate the medal and the t-shirt he wore in the final to an auction with all the money going to our project.

### **What has the project achieved in terms of donations?**

When discussing the project I proposed that I use my own apartment for storage. Well, right now I can hardly move! I have 26 boxes consisting of almost 300 rackets, 900 shuttlecocks, more than 1,500 t-shirts, shorts and jumpers and around 50 training shoes, all in very good condition. It's been a fantastic response. The Danish Badminton Federation alone donated 300 new t-shirts. All the boxes will be shipped to Haiti in June and hopefully I will go out to Haiti in the second half of July. I don't know what to expect but I'm hoping there will be a positive reaction and I'm looking forward to seeing it for myself.