

Award for the Best Peace Project from an International Sports Federation
INTERNATIONAL TENNIS TABLE FEDERATION



Peace and Sport, Colombianos and ITTF project targeting 3 disadvantaged regions in Colombia.

International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) "Breaking Down Barriers with Table Tennis Balls"

BACKGROUND:

ITTF has a long history of using table tennis as a vehicle for social change and facilitating sustainable peace.

"PingPong Diplomacy" in 1971 is well known as a catalyst for China to open its doors to the West.

In 1991, the ITTF President worked passionately to bring the two Korea's together for the World Championships in 1991. This was to be a prelude to competing at the 1992 Olympic Games as a united team which surely would have greatly assisted in uniting the two Korea's. The 1991 World Table Tennis Championships was a special moment with the unified women's team taking the gold medal, but unfortunately the second part of the plan was not achieved.

ITTF was the first International Sports Federation to officially recognize the unified South Africa Table Tennis Board, and played an active role in assisting their re-entry to the World Sporting Stage.

In 2004, ITTF was the first International Sports Federation to go back into Afghanistan post-war in a joint project with IOC. Not only were different ethnic groups working together for the first time in this project but also women joined the men



Official Logo of the ITTF Development Program.

for the first time in many years.

ITTF was active in assisting and promoting East Timor becoming a National Olympic Committee.

ITTF was the first International Sports Federation to recognize Kosovo and allow them to participate at the World Championships. Acceptance of all countries is a condition of being host, with several cases of "close calls" resulting in last minute "changes of heart" by the host due to seriousness with which ITTF treats this matter.



"PingPong Diplomacy" - Published in Newsweek 1971.

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The ITTF Development Program has a strong humanitarian focus in addition to the 100 courses conducted worldwide annually:

- Tsunami Rebuilding Project-Through fundraising and tapping into the generosity of the table tennis community included re-building projects, courses, training camps and equipment packages for affected countries
- Goodwill Fund provides special projects for disadvantaged groups and have included projects in Uganda-Congo DR-Iraq Kenya-Kosovo-Peru-Haiti-Cuba-Mine Education in Balkans outside of the normal National Federation courses.
- UNHCR Project in Yemen Refugee Camps
- Women's Project in Rural Egypt-changing the perception of women in society through table tennis.
- Regular Development Program Courses have included the following countries in the last 2 years: Angola-CongoDR Kenya-Rwanda-Solomon Islands-East Timor-Afghanistan-Yemen-Kosovo Iraq-Colombia-Haiti-CoteD'Ivoire-Madagascar-Jordan-El Salvador-Sierra Leone, all of which have a strong and positive impact at a level way beyond the sport itself.

2009

Three special projects highlight 2009:

1. Colombia Project-Targeting three disadvantaged areas using table tennis as the vehicle for peaceand social change
2. Jordan Project-Training local coaches to work in Refugee Camps and Clubs throughout Jordan, with an equipment package to assist with implementation.
3. Iraq Project-Training coaches from throughout the country using the newly released ITTF Coaching Manual in Arabic, while providing equipment assistance to implement programs on conclusion.

Colombia

A joint project between Peace and Sport, Colombianos, Butterfly Equipment Manufacturer and ITTF targeting Bogota, Cali and Cartagena as three of the most disadvantaged areas in Colombia. Planning has been underway for more than 12 months and included planning-evaluation visits, building of concrete table tennis tables, sending Butterfly table tennis equipment, appointing a Development Manager to co-ordinate the project and local table tennis coaches sympathetic and with a passion for this project. Regular table tennis sessions will be held using table tennis to develop co-operation, understanding and friendship while upskilling local leaders



Refugee camps in Jordan were assisted with table tennis programs and equipment.

to eventually take over the program to become self-sufficient.

Implementation phase begins in November, 2009 with ITTF Development Manager, Leandro Olvech (present at Peace and Sport Conference) leading the charge.

Selected participants from each of the regions will have the "chance of a lifetime" by being part of the World Junior Championships in Cartagena in December, 2009.

Jordan

A project firstly training local Jordan Table Tennis Coaches in the principles of both table tennis and dealing with traumatized youth in refugee camps, followed by practical sessions in the refugee camps and clubs. An equipment package was provided prior to the course for the implementation phase. Coaches trained during the course will continue the work in the Refugee Camps and Clubs around Jordan.

Iraq

Bringing together coaches from the entire country in a safe environment to learn the latest techniques provided by the latest translation of the ITTF Coaching Manual into Arabic. An equipment package was provided to replace equipment damaged or destroyed during the war. This course will be held in late November and follows an earlier course in March whereby the focus was on athletes with a disability and women, who have been marginalised as a result of the war. The enthusiasm and motivation shown was testament to the success of the course.

