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## PROFILE

# Olympafrica International Foundation

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The day after he was elected Head of the IOC, President Juan Antonio Samaranch wondered whether the Olympic Movement should get involved in assisting developing countries through their youth policies. He conceived the Olympafrica Programme, devised and implemented by the Senegalese architect Ibrahima Mbaye.

## PRESENTATION – GOALS OF THE PROGRAMME

Olympafrica is a programme of social development through sport, implemented through the construction of centres intended for spreading the Olympic spirit and mass education, mainly focused on sport in economical, local sports facilities.

Centres are self-managed by local populations and have facilities for sporting, cultural, economic and educational activities.

The intended targets of Olympafrica Programme can be summed up in the four following components:

- First, set up economic, though operational and attractive, makeshift sport and socio-educational mini-complexes to encourage young people to return to and stay where they belong;
- second, use the popular impact of sport to motivate sports fans while offering them sustainable development-oriented activities;
- third, get youth and underprivileged people involved in non-conventional self-managed educational programmes;
- and fourth, foster the advent of young talent through local activity programmes provided by Olympafrica Centres.

The first Olympafrica Centre was built in Somone, Senegal and was inaugurated in November 1988. This Centre was named after Juan Antonio Samaranch in February 1990, in presence of the IOC President and Federico Mayor, Director General of UNESCO at that time.

In September 1992, ANOCA, the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa, adopted a resolution to form the Olympafrica Foundation, which was established on June 23, 1993 in Lausanne, under the effective chairmanship of President Samaranch. The Foundation is thus an expression of ANOCA and is an integral part of this major international institution whose President also carries out the duties and functions of the Chairman of the Foundation.

Since then, the Olympafrica International Foundation has significantly developed and stands out as the major tool of the Olympic Movement in Africa for social development through sport.

To date, centres have been opened and are operational in almost 37 African countries, a figure that will have rocketed by the end of the current four-year programme in 2012.



## PARTNERSHIP – INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Olympafrica Foundation, through various partnerships with international sports institutions, foundations and universities, is in a position to support recipient populations in the fields of sport, education, cultural and economic activities.

With the wealth of financial and technical support of the IOC, ANOCA, Daimler, International Sports Federations such as the IAAF and many other partners, the Olympafrica Foundation has been actively involved in improving the standards of living of millions of people in the continent.

Appreciable results have been obtained in various areas thanks to the commitment of the voluntary managers and instructors from the neighbouring communities, but in particular, thanks to the fertile partnerships phased in with educational institutions and local associations.

All the managers (and to a lesser extent, the instructors) of the centres are trained by the Foundation through modules, which include management of a centre, and of sports, cultural and economic programmes, knowledge of the Olympic Movement, strengthening of peace and youth supervision.

## MAIN SPORTING ACTIVITIES

In addition to daily activities and self-developed projects at the centres, the foundation has financed programmes such as the Daimler Football Cup, the IBA Mbaye Fellowship, and the IAAF school-oriented programme.

These sports programmes enable a lot of talented youngsters to be discovered, who may later join sports clubs affiliated to relevant national federations.

This is how several young athletes, supervised by the Centres, have distinguished themselves in national, continental and international competitions.

## SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES

With the financial position of the Foundation, it has recently had the opportunity to finance small production units that allow Olympafrica Centres to become more independent while remaining NOC property even if they are managed by local populations.

In this way, the Foundation has been able to finance music equipment, tables, chairs, and tents, agricultural programmes, a moto-cab programme and endemic disease awareness programmes, a carpentry workshop dressmaking shops, screen printing shops, and a beauty parlour.

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Regarding the cooperation component, major programmes are underway, including the establishment, with the collaboration of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, of the internet site called “Palaver Tree”, which will provide all youth attending the Centres the opportunity to get assistance in various areas.

Several Centres have also been provided with libraries by the Foundation of the World Tourist Organization (UNWTO) through its “Thank You Small Libraries” Programme.

The Olympafrica Foundation is also in charge throughout Africa of the Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP) of the IOC.



Olympafrica has signed an agreement with the You First Foundation, an organisation created by Spanish basketball players which is active in various areas offering training of youths and coaches, and in providing computers.

Various contacts have been initiated to implement new sports and environmental programmes which will expand the opportunities provided to local populations. This is how new partnerships will be finalised shortly with international federations including the International Federation of Associated Wrestling Styles (FILA), the African Weightlifting Federation and the US Olympic Committee.

The Foundation has also entered into an agreement with the Keba Mbaye Foundation that grants fellowships to the best sporting students.

Further to so many agreements, there is no doubt that attendance at the centres, which is already quite noticeable as they work with several million children every year, will continue to rise in the future. The centres will play an increasing role in the improvement of the living standards of local populations. ■

## ■ Recommended citation

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