

# Olympism in Practice: Psychosocial Impacts of an Educational Sport Initiative on Greek and Turkish Cypriot Youth

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## Abstract

The current study investigated the impacts of a program that employed a blend of sports and cultural enrichment, known as Olympism, to build bridges between Greek and Turkish Cypriot children residing on the island of Cyprus. The four-month long program included two months of instructor training, meetings with the parents and a six-day summer camp that hosted 96 youth and 20 instructors from Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. A mixed methods approach was employed to assess the psychosocial impact of the program on the youth and the instructors. The data was analyzed using a multi-method approach that employed Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (RMANOVA), t-tests, descriptive statistics and qualitative methods. The results indicated a statistically significant main effect on Time (within-subject variable) and Ethnicity (between subject variable) in Factor 1 (Attitudes about Cross Cultural Interaction, Friendship and Collaboration). The RMANOVA indicated no statistically significant between-subject variable interactions. In addition, paired sample t-tests indicated statistically significant differences on the beliefs that through sports children can learn to collaborate more with other people. The great majority of the participants indicated that they made new friends and perceived positive inter-communal attitudinal changes as a result of their participation in the camp.

**Keywords:** Sport for peace and development, Conflict resolution, Inter-ethnic conflict, Olympism and Olympic education

In recent years there has been a growing social movement toward the use of sport as a vehicle for social change, reaching communities with messages in ways that traditional sport practices and interventions cannot (Beutler, 2008; Kidd, 2008; Levermore, 2008; Lyras, 2005, 2007, 2010; Sugden, 2007). One of the orientations of this new practice is to use sport to reduce nationalism in the multicultural societies in which we live and to promote cross cultural and inter-ethnic dialogue in regions where conflict exists (Amara, Aquilina, Henry & Taylor, 2005; Fountain, 1999; Lyras, 2007, 2009; Sugden 1991, 2006, 2007; United Nations, 2002, 2003, 2005). These relatively new sport practices, are mainly driven, initiated, and implemented by individual entrepreneurial efforts that are often ignored by mainstream governing agencies (Kidd, 2008; Levermore, 2008). In many cases, the sport programs are poorly planned and do not provide scientific evidence about their effectiveness (Lyras, 2007; 2009; 2010). One of the major challenges of the sport manager/sport educator of the new millennium is the interdisciplinary background that he/she has to possess to more effectively design, implement, and assess sport practices that aim to achieve social change and development (Amis & Silk, 2005; Chalip & Thibault, 2006; Lyras, 2007). What is unclear at this stage of research is the context and outcomes that such practices should possess to more effectively influence

individuals, societies, and the rest of the world. It is suggested that a blend of (a) sports (Binder, 2001; IOC, 1994; UN 2003, 2005) with (b) cultural enrichment activities (e.g., arts, dance, and music) and (c) global citizenship education (e.g. global issues awareness, human rights and environment) (Amara, et al., 2005; Fountain, 1999) can provide a framework for positive transformation in regions where hostility exists (IOC, 1994; Lyras, 2007; 2009; Sugden 1991, 2006, 2007; UN, 2003, 2005).

Sport, when employed in a cultural enrichment setting designed to achieve educational objectives, is what Pierre De Coubertin envisioned for the revival of the Modern Olympic Games (Binder, 2001; IOC, 1994). The main objectives of the founder of the Modern Olympics were to disseminate a moral philosophy to the existing sport practices in order to provide a healthy, educational environment for youth, to grow and develop and to inspire humanity for the development of a peaceful world. This approach to sport is also known as Olympism.

A number of studies investigated the impact of sport and physical education classes on moral development (Beedy, 1997; Bredemeier & Shields, 2001; Devereaux, 1971; Ebbeck & Gibbons, 2003; Gibbons & Ebbeck, 1997; Gibbons, Ebbeck & Weiss, 1995; Haan, 1985; Shields & Bredmeier, 1994). However, there is no scientific evidence that speaks to the impacts of programs that use Olympism on youth in general or, in particular, on youth that come from countries where conflict exists. Researchers and humanitarian institutions strongly recommend further investigation of the characteristics and the psychosocial impacts of programs that use sports (UN, 2005) and Olympism (Binder, 2001) for the development of evidence-based replicable sport-for-conflict resolution initiatives.

With this foundation and inspired by the philosophy and the objectives of Olympism, the Doves Olympic Movement (The Doves Project) was developed to promote sport educational initiatives that utilized the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations under the framework of the philosophy and principles of the Olympic Movement (Lyras, 2003, 2005, 2007; Lyras, et al., 2005). In the summer of 2005, the Doves Olympic Movement conducted the first bi-communal educational sport initiative on the island of Cyprus. The initial objectives were to provide the new generation of Greek and Turkish Cypriot youth with the essential resources to help them overcome long held negative beliefs and practices of the past. The purpose of the program was to encourage Greek and Turkish Cypriots to develop "a better understanding for each other's needs; inter- ethnic tolerance and acceptance; friendships among members of both communities, and patterns of working together in the pursuit of common goals" (Lyras, et al., 2005, p. 2).

## Cyprus, the European Union, and the Doves Olympic Movement Project

Cyprus, an island in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, has a long history of inter-ethnic conflict between Greek Cypriots,

who represent 77% of the population of the island, and Turkish Cypriots, who represent 18% of the legal population of the island and 5% from other nationalities, including Armenians and Maronites. The complexity and the controversies of the Cyprus problem at both the national and the international level have kept both communities segregated and in a state of hostility for more than 40 years. For the past three decades Cyprus has been a divided island. Greek and Turkish Cypriots have been living in their own separate communities with minimal contact or communication. This separation has contributed to a level of mistrust, fear and insecurity, which has made it difficult for the two communities to live and work together in peace. The unsettled political aspects of the Cyprus problem create an unstable situation on the island and present obstacles to the development of both communities.

The use of sports programs as a medium to reach youth has not been utilized in Cyprus. In view of this shortcoming, The Doves Olympic Movement Project (Lyras, 2003), developed a number of sport-for-conflict resolution interventions to fill this gap. The purpose of this study was to investigate the psychosocial impacts of the program 2005 Doves Olympic Movement Summer Camp on the participants, the first inter-ethnic sport project ever conducted in the island. Due to the lack of previous empirical evidence and given the exploratory nature of this study, no hypotheses were made for this study. The research questions of this study were as follows:

**Q1:** Are there significant differences in attitudes about cross-cultural interaction, friendship and collaboration, before and after program intervention? (Pre and Post - Time Differences)

**Q2:** Are there significant differences in attitudes about cross cultural interaction, friendship and collaboration between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots before and after program intervention? (Pre/Post - Ethnic Differences)

**Q3:** Which organizational components of the camp experience are perceived by the participants as more effective in bringing about changes in inter-communal friendship, collaboration and tolerance?

### **The 2005 Doves Olympic Movement Project**

The four-month initiative focused on two main areas. The first pertained to the Pre Camp activities (Phase I) and the second referred to the six-day long residential Camp Experience itself (Phase II). Phase I, the Pre Camp Experience, comprised the following activities and experiences: (a) recruitment and training of 20 instructors; (b) meetings with parents and youth (orientation). Phase II of the project referred to the six-day long Camp Experience itself. The camp experience consisted of (a) a sport/physical activity component, (b) a cultural enrichment program, (c) an educational component (instructors and educational methodology), and (d) organizational components (setting, location, grouping, facilities).

#### **Phase I: The pre camp experience.**

**Recruitment and training of instructors (June-July 2005).** During the first month of the project, 20 instructors from both communities were recruited and attended four daily workshops in Nicosia, Cyprus at the facilities of a research institution and one weekend-long workshop in Agros, Cyprus. This stage was considered as the most crucial for several reasons. First, at the pre camp stage, the organizers wanted to develop a strong team

of inspired and caring instructors who could then accomplish successful recruitment of the youth. The second reason was to prepare the instructors to lead the summer camp experience by educating them and by developing them as agents of change. The third reason was to provide a theoretical foundation for all the instructors who could have the potential to continue implementing activities and meetings after the camp experience was over. The training was also important in giving instructors from both communities the opportunity to develop friendships, and close relationships and/or patterns of working together in an attempt to create role models for the youth during the camp experience.

**Meetings with parents and youth (July 2005).** The organizers and the instructors of each community invited the youth and their parents to participate in two local meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to inform the parents about the activities, the goals, the philosophy and the potential outcomes of the program. During these meetings, the instructors discussed with the parents their experience during the two months training and provided important information about the summer camp.

**Phase II: The camp experience as a treatment (July 30-August 4, 2005).** The treatment was a six-day Olympic camp in Agros, a small village in the Pitsilia Mountains in Cyprus. During the camp 96 youth and 20 instructors from both communities came together, learned the fundamentals of their favorite sport(s), received an introduction to human rights and environmental concepts, and learned how to use the internet. The youth also engaged in daily conflict management activities. Further, the youth experienced a variety of sports and engaged in evening entertainment activities. Every day of the camp the youth were introduced to a different theme (e.g., Human Rights Day, Environment Day, Olympic Movement Day, etc). The youth were housed in groups of three or four per room. The room assignment was based on the parents' and youth's requests without mixing Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Friends were put together in the same room. During the orientation of the camp the organizers emphasized that youth were allowed to make room changes for ethnically mixed group rooms after making a special verbal request. Youth received a personal handbook with questions that helped to facilitate the completion of the projects. The handbook was confidential and the youth kept it for their private use. Every day, youth reported their impressions that related to the topic of each day (journal).

### **Method**

#### **Sampling Procedures**

The sample consisted of 20 male and female instructors and 96 boys and girls from the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities of Cyprus with balanced gender and ethnicity.

**The Instructors.** The instructors were selected by using snowball sampling procedures (Babbie, 2004). Snowball sampling refers to the procedure in which the researcher locates the targeted population who then "provide the information needed to locate other members of that population whom they happen to know" (Babbie, p.184). The Co-Project directors contacted two sport journalists (one Greek and one Turkish Cypriot), who then helped the Doves Project directors identify and recruit the instructors for the program. It was also explained to them the need for recruiting instructors that have a background in youth sports and education

and who were also fluent in English. Additionally, UNOPS/UNDP disseminated information about the Doves project program and the intention to recruit qualified instructors to a number of institutions (e.g., Fulbright, AMIDEAST and USAID). The candidates who were interested joined the instructors' workshop that included an explanation of the Doves Project goals, philosophy and activities. The candidates who expressed interest in the Doves Project and who attended the workshops were given the opportunity to participate in the Summer Camp as instructors.

**The Youth.** During the training sessions of the instructors, a selection committee was developed with six members (three Greek Cypriots and three Turkish Cypriots) who were responsible for identifying and selecting participants, and implementing the recruitment plan. The committee was asked to define certain criteria that would (a) provide equal opportunities to Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriot boys and girls between 13-16 years old, (b) emphasize the balance between sex and (c) geographic representation (urban-suburban and rural). In this respect, the sample was based on quota procedures that focused on the posited selection criteria for participation in the program. Information about the program, the design and the purpose of the data collection and analysis was provided to all the Doves Project participants (e.g. the instructors, the parents and the children). Participation in the research project was voluntary, and all participants signed informed assent and consent to participate.

#### **Design, Instrumentation, Data Collection, and Analysis**

This study was a field experimental research that used mixed methods (a) to assess the psychosocial impacts of a sport and cultural enrichment program (Phase II: Camp Experience) on Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Youth (RQ1 and RQ2), and to (b) identify characteristics and the perceived effective organizational components of the Doves Olympic Movement Summer Camp 2005 (Lyras, et al., 2005) that brought about positive cross cultural changes in attitudes and new patterns of collaboration between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot youth and instructors (RQ3). The Principal Investigator (PI) and author of this manuscript developed the design of this program. The program was designed with the support provided by the Olympic Solidarity (Lyras, 2001, 2003) and the Cyprus Research Foundation (Lyras, 2004, 2007) and aimed to develop an evidence-based Sport for Development and Peace Model that can be applied and replicated in other countries across the globe. The implementation of the 2005 Doves Olympic Movement Summer Camp, which was part of a five-year long initiative called The Doves Project, was made feasible with support from the United Nations Development Program, United Nations Office of Program Services, and the United States Agency for International Development (Lyras, Yiannakis, & Kartakoullis, 2005). Additionally, the Doves Project has created a global social network with partners from a number of organisations around the world to serve as resourcing for its programming and provide development opportunities for organizers and instructors. Over the first year of its operation, the Doves Project has worked with partners from the Sports PLUS, University of Connecticut, University of Nicosia, Yale University, and the Institute for International Sport.

The present study used five major sources of information to

evaluate the impacts of the program. The PI, in collaboration with the research associates and the scientific consultants of the program, developed:

- (a) Open-ended questionnaires that were administered at the meetings/training of the instructors. Examples of questions included:
  - What would you like to see as an outcome of the program?
  - What are your expectations from this program? Please explain your vision, your goals and desires that pertain to this program.

The questionnaires were written in English and two translators (Greek and Turkish) provided clarifications where needed. Some instructors responded in their own native language. All responses were anonymous. At the end of the program, all responses were translated into English. Three sets of questionnaires were administered by the researcher during the first three workshops of the instructors. In addition to the open-ended questions, and during the treatment, the instructors and youth had a personal manual which they could submit to the organizers at the end of the program as a form of suggestions for continuing inter-communal initiatives.

- (b) Focus group sessions to debrief the experience (Pre Camp Experience and Camp Experience) and to highlight the least favorite activities and components of the program.

The PI developed the questions of the focus groups and were validated by using a panel of four experts. The panel consisted of one professor of Sociology of Sport, two lecturers in Sport Management and Sociology of Sport and one educator. The instructors selected youth that were able to express their ideas in English and made an effort to identify boys and girls with age differences (balance in ethnicity, gender and age). The focus groups were conducted in English on the fifth day of the program. A Turkish Cypriot translator was present and facilitated the discussion, which was recorded.

- (c) The youth were pre and post tested using several fixed choice questions. These addressed various attitudes and beliefs about cross-cultural friendships, collaboration and co-existence. The questionnaire was administered during the first and last day of the camp experience and included 12 items. The pretest was administered during the first day of the camp by the PI, and the posttest by the instructors during the last day. The questionnaire was anonymous and employed a six-point Likert scale format. Validity was established using a panel of six experts, three Greek and three Turkish Cypriots who assessed the face validity of the instrument and evaluated the items in relation to the goals of the program (attitudes and beliefs about cross cultural friendships, collaboration and coexistence). Out of the 96 pre and post questionnaires only 79 pretest and 89 were usable.

- (d) The sponsors (UNOPS/UNDDP) of the program also sub-contracted another phase of the project to an independent research team from a private college in Cyprus. Their job was to develop an instrument (Camp Evaluation Questionnaire) to assess the youth's (a) perceived satisfaction of the activities of the camp and (b) perceived changes in attitudes

and behaviors. The questionnaire was anonymous and was administered by the instructors during the last day of the program. No pretest was administered in this phase of the project. The instrument assessed perceived cross-cultural attitudes and satisfaction from the camp experience. The face and content validity of the Camp Evaluation Questionnaire was established at a group meeting in which the independent research team presented the Camp Evaluation Questionnaire to the directors of the UNOPS/UNDP sponsored summer initiatives and the Bi-communal Development Program UNOPS/UNDP officers. The suggestions and conclusions from the group meeting were incorporated in a revised Camp Evaluation Questionnaire.

Table 1 indicates the number of the youth and instructors who completed the pre and post inventory, the post camp questionnaire, and those who participated in the focus groups

**Table 1. Number of the Youth and the Instructors who Participated in the Doves Project Assessment**

| Type            | Greek Cypriots | Turkish Cypriots | Total |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------|-------|
| Pre-Post        | 44             | 35               | 79    |
| Post Evaluation | 46             | 43               | 89    |
| Focus Groups    | 5 Youth        | 6 Youth          | 11    |
|                 | 3 Instructors  | 4 Instructors    | 7     |

To address RQ1 and RQ2, a 2(Time) x 2(Ethnicity) Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (RMANOVA) and Paired Sample t-tests were performed. RMANOVA was conducted with one within-subject variable (Pre and Post cross cultural attitudes and beliefs) and one between-subject variables (Ethnicity).

To address RQ3 the following data was analyzed: (a) the instructors' training open-ended questionnaires, (b) the instructors' and the youth's focus groups, (c) the Camp Evaluation Questionnaire and (d) the reflections and observations of the PI. Grounded theory techniques (inductive theory building) (Creswell, 1998; 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) were employed to analyze the data collected during the camp experience (Organizational components). Open, axial and selective coding (Creswell, 1998; 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) were employed to identify themes, trends and patterns that surfaced in the open-ended responses and the focus group sessions. Coding was conducted by the PI and two research associates who conducted the focus group interviews. Findings were analyzed and interpreted in the context of the existing literature. The overarching theme of the analysis and interpretation was the organizational components of the four-month long initiative that were perceived as being most responsible for bringing about changes in inter-communal friendship, collaboration and tolerance (RQ3).

In summary, five sources of measurement were employed (pre and post data, focus groups, open ended questions, a Camp Evaluation Questionnaire, and the reflections and observations of the PI) to assess the characteristics and the psychosocial impacts of the camp experiences. The validity of the findings was enhanced with triangulation of different sources of information (Babbie, 2004; Cresswell, 2003). In other words, by employing all five sources of information the internal validity of the project was

enhanced.

### Preliminary Data Screening and Exploratory Factor Analysis

Preliminary data screening was conducted to identify missing values and normality non-violation assumptions. The assumptions of normal distribution were tested by examining the skewness and kurtosis of each item. Some items were found with positive skewness, but were not eliminated because the violation was not critical. The normal distribution assumptions were within the acceptable range (skewness between of -3 and +3) (Tabashnick & Fidell, 2001). Missing values of the instruments were below 5%, which is also an acceptable percentage for further analysis (Tabashnick & Fidell, 2001).

After data screening, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify the factors of the pre and post questionnaire. KMO and Barrett's test was initially performed to evaluate the sampling adequacy of the analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy indicated that the correlation matrix was factorable (KMO= .738) and Principal Axis Factor (PAF) was considered to be appropriate for this analysis (Pett et al., 2003). PAF is considered appropriate when the researcher does not know the number of factors that will emerge from the correlation between the items of an instrument (Pett, et al., 2003).

PAF was selected as an extraction solution. In PAF, only common, or shared, variance is analyzed and provides a better estimate of the correlation between the items. On the other hand, Principal Components Analysis (PCA) solutions include errors of measurement that account for all variance in the correlation matrix in which it is applied (Pett et al., 2003). Therefore, PAF is considered a superior solution from PCA (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994, as cited in Pett et al., 2003).

Three methods of analysis were used to determine the number of factors that were retained: Parallel analysis, Scree plot and Eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Finally, Oblique rotation was selected as a rotation technique. Oblique rotation is recommended when the number of factors that could emerge from the analysis is not known (Pett et al., 2003). From the EFA analysis, three factors were revealed after eliminating three items 9, 10 and 11 (double loading).

Cronbach's alpha reliability was conducted for each factor after reversing the negatively stated items (6 and 7). The reliability analyses of the pretest data indicated adequate reliability for Factor 1 (.737) and low internal consistency in Factors 2 and 3 (.548 and .542 respectively). The three factor solution accounted for 44.4% of the variance in the pretest scores. Based on these results it was decided to conduct RMANOVA with only Factor 1 (Attitudes about Cross-Cultural Interaction Friendship and Collaboration) (see Table 2). Reliability values below .70 are not considered acceptable for attitudinal scale analysis (Gable & Wolf, 1993). Two new variables were created before performing the 2x2x2 RMANOVA analysis, Factor 1 Pre and Factor 1 Post. These new variables were created by calculating the average of items 5, 6, 7, and 8 before and after the treatment responses (pre and post values respectively). Follow-up factor analysis and reliability test of F1 was also conducted for the posttest scores and indicated increased internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha .80) and variance explained by the model (57.5% explained variance). The remaining items

were analyzed by using paired sample t-tests to investigate pre and post changes. The following table indicates the items of Factor 1:

**Table 2. Attitudes about Cross-Cultural Interaction Friendship and Collaboration (Factor 1:ACCIFC)**

| Items   | Loadings |
|---|----------|
| 5. Sports can become a great tool to develop friendship, and collaboration between Turkish and Greek Cypriots           | .687     |
| 6. Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots can not live together.   | -.642    |
| 7. Greek and Turkish Cypriots can never be true friends   | -.696    |
| 8. The new generation can develop new practices for peace and understanding between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots | .557     |

**Results**

A 2 (Time) x 2 (Ethnicity) Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (RMANOVA) was performed to address the first three research questions by identifying main and interaction effects. RMANOVA was conducted with one within-subject variable (Pre and Post cross cultural attitudes and beliefs) and one between-subject variables (Ethnicity). Paired samples t-tests were performed with the remaining items to investigate possible before and after treatment differences. Follow-up ANOVA's were performed to the items that indicated significant changes across time, to investigate possible interaction across ethnicity.

**Research Question One**

*Are there significant differences in attitudes about cross-cultural interaction, friendship and collaboration, before and after program intervention? (Pre and Post - attitude changes)*

RMANOVA revealed a significant within subjects main effect for the time,  $F(1, 69) = 11.41, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .142$  (large effect size). Results indicate that for the youth who completed the pre and post questionnaires, there was a statistically significant difference in their attitudes about cross-cultural interaction, friendship and collaboration, before and after program intervention (see Table 3). The interaction effects (ethnicity) are being interpreted in RQ2. The means of the pre and post results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 3. Within Subject Variable (Time) Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance**

| Source                 | Df | F    | Significance |
|------------------------|----|------|--------------|
| <i>Within Subjects</i> |    |      |              |
| Time                   | 1  | 11.4 | .001         |
| Error                  | 69 |      |              |

**Table 4. Pre and Post Descriptive Statistics for Factor 1: Attitudes about Cross-Cultural Interaction Friendship and Collaboration (ACCIFC)**

| Time | Mean | SD   | N  |
|------|------|------|----|
| Pre  | 4.59 | 1.21 | 73 |
| Post | 4.98 | 1.14 | 73 |

Paired t-tests were conducted with the remaining items (see table 5). Results indicated statistically significant differences between the pre and posttest scores of item 1 (pre  $M=4.82$ , post

$M=5.22, t(77) = 2.54, p=.013$ , Cohen's  $d=.28$ , small effect size). In other words, there was a statistically significant difference between the pre and post participant scores indicating that participants learned to collaborate more with other people. Follow-up ANOVA indicated no interaction across ethnicity.

**Table 5. Items analysed Using Paired T-Tests**

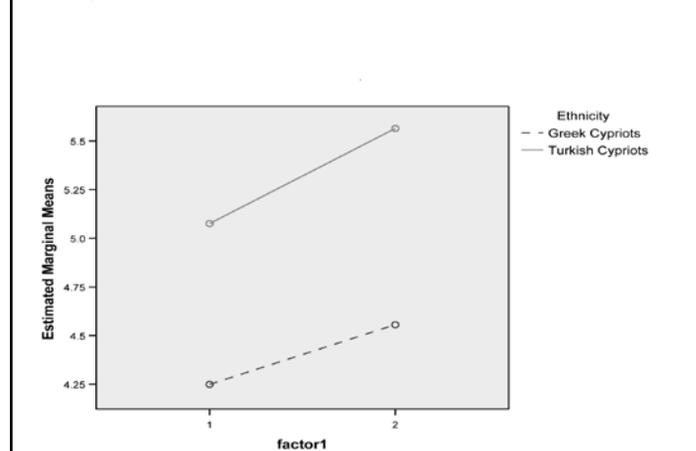
| Items  |
|--|
| 1. Through sports I learn to collaborate with other people                       |
| 2. Sports bring people together and help them develop close friendships          |
| 3. Sports help people overlook cultural differences                              |
| 4. Sport helps people find positive ways to solve problems                       |
| 9. Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots can work together                         |
| 10. I would help people with different ethnic identity to become part of my team |
| 11. I am open to learn from other cultures                                       |
| 12. I make a lot of friends through sports                                       |

**Research Question Two**

*Are there significant differences in attitudes about cross cultural interaction, friendship and collaboration between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots before and after program intervention? (Pre and Post- ethnicity)*

RMANOVA for research question two did not reveal statistically significant differences between ethnicity (within subjects interaction) ( $F [1, 69]= .603, p>.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 =.009$ ) in attitudes about cross-cultural interaction, friendship and collaboration, before and after program intervention (see Figure 1 and Table 6). In other words the treatment had a positive effect on both Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

**Figure 1**  
*Ethnicity Mean Scores Across Time on Factor 1: Attitudes about Cross-Cultural Interaction Friendship and Collaboration (ACCIFC)*



While the between-subject analysis indicated no interaction effect, the within- subject analysis indicated a main effect for ethnicity ( $F [1, 69] =15.47, p<.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 =.183$ , large effect size). In other words, results indicate that the Turkish Cypriots showed higher scores than the Greek Cypriots before and after

**Table 6. Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (Time and Ethnicity)**

| Source                  | df | F     | Significance |
|-------------------------|----|-------|--------------|
| <i>Within Subjects</i>  |    |       |              |
| Time                    | 1  | 11.41 | .001         |
| Time x Ethnicity        | 1  | .603  | .440         |
| Error                   | 69 |       |              |
| <i>Between Subjects</i> |    |       |              |
| Ethnicity               | 1  | 15.47 | .000         |
| Error                   | 69 |       |              |

the treatment (+.83 and +.99 respectively). Table 7 reports the pre and post descriptive statistics of the camp participants (ethnicity) from where one can indicate the higher mean values of the Turkish Cypriot participants. This means that the Turkish Cypriots had more positive attitudes about cross-cultural interaction, friendship and collaboration than the Greek Cypriots, before and after the treatment.

**Table 7. Pre and Post Descriptive Statistics of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot Youth on Factor 1: Attitudes about Cross-Cultural Interaction Friendship and Collaboration (ACCIFC)**

|                         | Pre Test | Post Test | Difference |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Turkish Cypriots</b> |          |           |            |
| Mean                    | 5.06     | 5.53      | +.47       |
| Standard Deviation      | .86      | .53       | -.33       |
| N                       | 32       | 32        |            |
| <b>Greek Cypriots</b>   |          |           |            |
| Mean                    | 4.23     | 4.54      | +.31       |
| Standard Deviation      | 1.33     | 1.30      | -.30       |
| N                       | 41       | 41        |            |

### Research Question Three

*Which organizational components of the camp experience are perceived by the participants as more effective in bringing about changes in inter-communal friendship, collaboration and tolerance? (Organizational Program Components)*

The youth and instructors who participated in the focus groups emphasized that the social-residential component of the Doves Project created a sense of community with shared values where each individual could learn and play. This setting was perceived as an idealistic "alternative reality" that helped participants temporarily escape from the influence of their families, politicians, the media, church and peers. Both youth and instructors reported increased collective beliefs that they succeeded in becoming positive agents of peace, stability and change.

**Residential aspect and social component: Sense of empowered community.** It was agreed by all the participants that the social and residential component helped the participants develop a sense of community: "we establish a village here, you know ...Father and kids you know" (Male Turkish Cypriot

(TC) Instructor). The social component of the program gave the opportunity even to "the less sociable ones" to come closer to one another. One instructor reported that:

This, in combination with the lunchtime activities, e.g., conflict management had all kids starting to feel more comfortable, and eventually, gatherings of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots started to take place. This was positively commented by the instructors in order to emphasize the importance of the formation of mixed groups. (Male Greek Cypriot (GC) Instructor)

The residential aspect and the whole experience created an increased sense of community that promoted strong collective beliefs that they achieved what the politicians failed to achieve:

It's a chance to change our community. Imagine, it's 90 kids. If we do it every month, in two months will be 180 kids. So, imagine if you are going to challenge 90 kids every month. We can change the society, it's our mission. The education system, religious or politicians they failed. But we succeeded. Because we brought them together. We do this job better than them. (Male TC Instructor)

Eighty percent of the focus group participants (7 instructors and 11 youth) indicated an increased sense of collective beliefs that the participants could contribute to the stability of the island. Youth were asked to clarify how the camp experience contributed to fostering the bi-communal relationships. Seventy per cent responded positively that the camp experience facilitated strong beliefs that "we know that we can live together." One child explained that the camp experience helped the participants "in the way that we trust them more and we will find a solution faster." Youth and instructors also stated that the location and the facilities were perceived as ideal.

All of the youth and the instructors that participated in the focus groups emphasized that: (a) six days were not enough, (b) that they were going to miss each other, and (c) that they "should see each other again." The camp was perceived as "a very good experience. We met each other, we discussed, we made friends. It was like talking to our friends from our community." Trust and positive emotions and beliefs were developed. One respondent said: "some people get in love, they are very good friends and things. It's good." Youth reported that they "made a lot of friends and I think it's good for the future". All of the participants of the focus groups agreed that "... five days is not enough. Not 6 days. Two weeks maybe." One child stated that "five of us - we are going holidays together to Ayia Napa."

Youth were also asked to explain why they thought that the camp was perceived as a positive experience. The majority stated that they had the chance to build: (a) positive feelings, (b) learn how the other community thinks, and (c) learn that despite possible differences, Greek and Turkish Cypriots can live together. Through the camp an interaction between emotions, cognition and behaviors was observed. "Some fears I used to have before I met them, disappeared" (Turkish Cypriot Boy). An instructor also mentioned that the youth's "ideas are not clear. Now, we hold them and we taught them for a week: we can live together." Youth also reported that through the experience, "we get to know each other better, we know their feelings for us and what they think about our problem." One child responded that "despite language, we touched each other we congratulated each other and we understood how

we felt." Youth were asked to express their thoughts about the setting of the program and agreed that it promoted cross-cultural tolerance: "In our everyday life we can't meet Turkish Cypriots, so it wouldn't have any difference. But if we can meet each other, if we come together, we can live together better, because of this experience."

Youth and instructors agreed that the "after hours" residential component was considered as one of the more vital components of the program since youth had the opportunity to interact freely and build friendships:

According to my observations kids built friendships after half past eleven. They were supposed to sleep after eleven. And you see them. They don't sleep. They go around. Next time, we should not tell them 'Go to sleep'. We should let them free. Not until morning, but I mean we should give them some time. Kids are establishing friendships and communicating in their free time, like after the lunch, before the lunch or during the lunch, during the dinner, they try to talk. Because when they have free time, I see them getting in a group and some Greek Cypriots teach Greek and some Turkish Cypriots teach Turkish. You know, this was the main idea of the camp. (Male TC Instructor)

Another instructor stated that the first two days youth were quiet and suspicious. During the third day, she realized that "things started to work." She stated that at that time she started facing problems that were similar to the problems that she would face in any other camp (not bi-communal). This, according to all instructors, was an indication that the program was successful:

[Greek Translation]. Yes, they were not sure. At the second and third day- especially last night for instance, I was impressed. I was going in their rooms to take Greek Cypriots or to take Turkish Cypriots out from each others' rooms. In other words they started to feel better with one another and one could say 'here's my jersey' to the other...(Female GC Instructor)

#### **An experience away from family, politicians, and media.**

Instructors agreed that the camp was successful because it promoted interaction away from the media and the politicians. One instructor stated that some parents were not supportive of such bi-communal interaction. The youth though, had the opportunity to interact with one another and make their own decisions:

[Greek Translation] My first negative experience took place even before the camp. There were some parents whose ideas were completely negative but her daughter insisted on coming to the camp. There was conflict between them. The child was feeling very bad, she wanted to come, but her father was telling her 'don't you dare seeing you doing this, this and that' and he forced in a way the child- in a way he tried to make her follow his 'expected' behaviors, in the way he wanted. I mean he gave her certain limits. However, the positive thing of this story is that I observed the child did not follow anything that she was told to do. (Female GC Instructor)

Forty percent of the instructors (out of 7 instructors) also stated that youth often had moral dilemmas since in the camp they were expected to do things that were contrary to what they heard and learned prior to this experience:

[Greek translation] I think that we have to consider that these youth came with an influence from their parents or any other

negative environment. This influence could have been positive or negative, but from the day they were born, until now, they learned certain things. It is obvious that it was difficult for them to ask themselves 'yes, should we trust them or should we not trust them?' It was difficult; they were making efforts to find a balance. This was obvious because during the first day I observed that they were behaving like 'yes we might be together but...'. (Female GC Instructor)

Eighty per cent (out of 7 instructors) of the instructors stated (and nobody disagreed) that the youth had the opportunity to change their perceptions and beliefs due to the fact that they were away from politics and the media. Responses similar to the following were reported by all the instructors:

I will give an example. The kids were saying the GC don't want peace, they don't want to live together, they voted no, we voted yes... And now, they see that these are the people that they see in the newspapers that they are told at the school that they came and killed us. Now they have the chance to see the GC, who are they. It's clear. (Male Turkish Cypriot Instructor)

After the closing ceremony, youth felt embarrassed and stayed in the lounge of the hotel for more than half an hour. One instructor reported:

All of us being there came to realize the great bonds that had been formed among the youth by seeing many of them trying to control their emotions and even their tears on the departure day. What is worth mentioning is that many of the kids were exchanging contact details in an effort to keep in touch. (Male Greek Cypriot Instructor)

#### **Summary and Discussion of the Research Findings**

A mixed methods design was applied to investigate the psychosocial impacts and the characteristics of the Doves Olympic Movement Summer Camp 2005, a six-day long residential camp. The participants were Greek and Turkish Cypriot youth. The first two research questions aimed to identify possible differences in Attitudes about Cross-Cultural Interaction, Friendship and Collaboration (ACCIFC). Research question one investigated possible changes of the participants' attitudes (ACCIFC) as a result of their participation in the Doves Project. Research question two investigated possible ethnic differences. Results indicated a statistically significant main effect on the within subjects variable (Time differences) in Factor 1(Attitudes about Cross Cultural Interaction Friendship and Collaboration). RMANOVA indicated no statistically significant between subject variable interaction (ethnicity). In addition, paired sample t-tests were performed on the remaining items of the pre and post questionnaire and revealed statistically significant differences on the beliefs that through sports youth can learn to collaborate more with other people. From the analysis of the post camp questionnaire, the majority of the youth who participated in the program indicated overall satisfaction, made new friends, and perceived positive inter-communal attitudinal changes as a result of their participation in the Camp. These findings are consistent with Sugden's (1991, 2006, 2007) sport for conflict resolution work in Northern Ireland and Israel.

Through research question three, the organizational characteristics of the Doves Project that were perceived as effective in bringing about positive changes in cross cultural interaction,

friendship and collaboration were investigated. Qualitative analysis indicated that the majority of the camp participants changed their cross-cultural attitudes positively. The social residential aspect of the program was also perceived as significant, since it provided "after hours" opportunities for exploration and bonding among the youth. Youth and instructors gained an increased sense of community and instructors were perceived as positive role models. The residential and social aspects of the program were perceived as important components that helped the participants develop a sense of community with shared values. Instructors also reported that the residential aspect of the program was an important element of the program since youth had an idealistic environment (alternative reality), away from the media, the politicians and their parents. The findings are consistent with the previously mentioned hypothesis that sports and inclusive Olympic Education can serve as vehicles towards building inter-ethnic tolerance and gender equality (Binder, 2001; IOC, 1994; UN, 2003, 2005).

### Limitations and Delimitations

Field experimental and qualitative studies entail a number of sources that can potentially threaten their internal and external validity (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). History, selection biases, the absence of random assignment, the use of multiple instructors from different ethnic backgrounds, and the testing procedures are considered to be among the major sources of invalidity in this study.

In this project history refers to a number of events that took place during the four-month long initiative and may have influenced the participants prior and during the camp experience. Since the four-month long intervention and the six-day Olympic Summer Camp took place in Cyprus, the media and a number of political and sport events may have influenced the responses of our subjects. The testing procedures refer to the possibility of (a) misreading the English pre and post questionnaires, and (b) misunderstanding the questions during the focus group interviews. Additionally, the majority of the participants had never interacted with members from the other community and therefore the self-reports in which participants had to express feelings, attitudes and beliefs might have a more positive tendency and higher values.

The delimitations that this study possesses are due to the selection procedures, the demographics, and geographical characteristics of the subjects. The subjects of this study were selected using quota sampling. The recruitment criteria were developed based on the goals of the Doves Project and the suggestions/requirements of the UNOPS/ UNDP steering committee. Such selection procedures do not ensure the acquisition of a sample with satisfactory attributes for generalizability.

Additionally, the situation in Cyprus has certain characteristics that may have affected the participants in a unique way, which might differ from other populations worldwide. In other words the findings might not be generalizable to other populations since the sample was selected to fit the criteria of the Doves Project. The last threat refers to the interaction between the testing situation and the treatment because the experimental setting had the characteristics of an "alternate reality" with idealistic conditions of co-existence (lack of mundane realism). The conditions that the intervention provided do not represent the characteristics of the real world

where opposition and conflict are in the "daily agenda" of the Cypriots through the media, politicians, family and peers. Lastly, the design of this study did not separate sport from the rest of the activities utilized in this study, such as the educational themes and the cultural enrichment program since the hypothesis of this project was grounded on the foundation that the combination of these activities, known as Olympism, was a key factor of the positive impact provided in this study. In summary, the absence of random sampling, the sample's unique characteristics (Greek and Turkish Cypriot youth) and the lack of mundane realism are considered the main threats to generalizability of this study.

### Sports for peace and development: General suggestions and future research.

The increasing trend of using sports as a medium to resolve social problems (e.g., conflict, lack of equality, cross-cultural intolerance) raises the need for providing scientific guidelines to better facilitate social change and personal development (UN, 2003, 2005). It is suggested that Olympic Education can serve as an appropriate framework to disseminate a more humanistic philosophy to the existing sport practices in order to provide a healthy, educational environment for youth and to inspire humanity for the development of a peaceful world (Binder, 2001; IOC 1994; Lyras, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2009). Since, however, engaging in physical activities does not automatically contribute to beneficial outcomes (Ebbeck & Gibbons, 2003; Gibbons & Ebbeck, 1997; Gibbons, et al., 1995), a detailed description of the context and the outcomes of these initiatives is considered vital to better describe, explain and predict human change and development.

Research on physical activity and moral development indicate that accepting and respecting self and others depends on the structure of the programs, the conditions, the context and the methods used (Beedy, 1997; Bredemeier & Shields, 2001; Devereaux, 1971; Ebbeck & Gibbons, 2003; Gibbons & Ebbeck, 1997; Gibbons, et al., 1995; Haan, 1985; Shields & Bredmeier, 1994). The framework of physical activities and moral development can provide substantial information for the effective implementation of sport initiatives that aim to promote development and conflict resolution.

The findings of this study provide scientific evidence that Olympism, under "controlled" conditions, can have a positive impact on youth that come from countries where conflict exists. However, the findings of this study should be interpreted with caution since this project was limited to the assessment of the impacts of a six-day summer camp on Greek and Turkish Cypriot youth. Future research should focus on providing information regarding the long term effects and transferability of the observed positive outcomes back to the participants' respective communities. In other words, future research should also try to understand (a) how long these positive attitudes and beliefs last (lasting effect over time), and (b) if these positive outcomes are transferred to other out-group members that did not participate in the camp (transferability over space and context).

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