



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 November 2021

English only

Commission for Social Development

Sixtieth session

7–16 February 2022

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
Priority Theme: Inclusive and resilient recovery from
COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and dignity
for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and
dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda**

Statement submitted by Associação Jadir de Taekwondo, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has increased poverty and inequality on a global scale, deepening the socioeconomic instability scenario and increasing people's vulnerability due to the rise of unemployment, lack of income and insufficient access to food.

At-risk populations living in the poorest communities have suffered the most from the increase in existing inequalities. UNICEF data show that even before the pandemic, two-thirds of the world's children had no access to any form of social protection.

According to data from the latest census conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics in 2010, there are 11.4 million people living in the poorest neighborhoods in Brazil. The routine of young people who live in these poverty-stricken places is marked by violence, poverty, unemployment, hunger, and scarcity. It is necessary to ensure that these young people and their families have access to sufficient resources to meet their subsistence needs, as well as to tackle the consequences of poverty, such as hunger, discrimination, and social exclusion.

Sport can be a strong catalyst not only to address poverty, but also to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations 2030 Agenda explicitly emphasizes the role of sport in achieving the SDGs. With the Resolution "Sport as an enabler of sustainable development," adopted on December 3, 2018, the UN reiterates its call to Member States to leverage sport to achieve the SDGs by working in collaboration with all stakeholders, including the sport community, civil society, international organizations, and the private sector.

For 21 years, the Jadir Taekwondo Association (AJTKD) has been using sport to promote the social inclusion of children and youth from disadvantaged communities in Rio de Janeiro, who often face significant barriers to their development, including lack of access to basic rights and high levels of violence. These girls and boys live in some of the most disadvantaged communities in Rio de Janeiro, from the favelas of São José and Serrinha, to the hillside slums in Praça Seca. Yet, through sport, they are seeing a bright future for themselves.

Since its foundation, AJTKD has assisted more than 7,000 families through its projects, which range from offering free sports classes to underprivileged children and youth, to donating food for students and their families.

Isolation from friends, along with reduced access to education and recreational activities, presented serious mental health challenges for children and youth since the beginning of the pandemic. At the start of quarantine, as a means of offering support to our students at this unusual time, AJTKD created a digital platform with a series of physical activity educational videos to help children and youth cope with stress and boredom and stay physically active. The content is available on AJTKD's digital platform, reaching students from over 20 regions of Rio de Janeiro. In addition, through remote sessions, coaches provide guidance for physical activity along with content to complete a variety of SDG-related challenges, keeping students committed to making their communities a better place while also staying safe.

As part of its quarantine agenda, AJTKD also held webinars and online learning workshops for its leaders and coaches to find solutions together to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

By linking sports and education as tools for building a life project for children and youth living in poor areas, AJTKD contributes to the development of its students, helping break the cycle of poverty.

The current global challenges to deal with the consequences of the pandemic require an integrated approach and the collaboration of all local governments, the private sector, and civil society. At this unprecedented time, the efforts to achieve the SDGs become even more urgent.
