

# Dream Building El Salvador

**Offering a healthy and supervised  
spare-time activity for children at risk  
of gang engagement in rural areas**

Uses table tennis as a vehicle to promote positive individual and social change in communities that lack opportunities and to promote the sport among groups that traditionally would not have access to table tennis.



<b>Location</b>	El Salvador
<b>Organisation</b>	El Salvador Table Tennis Federation (FESALTEME)
<b>Start-end date</b>	2012 – ongoing
<b>Target group</b>	6-18 years old
<b>Reach</b>	1,800 participants across 16 venues
<b>Partners</b>	International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) National Sports Institute (INDES) Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Local community youth centres
<b>Key facts</b>	Between 2012 and 2014, the programme has seen steady growth, moving from 11 to 16 venues and from 300 to 1,800 participants in 2014.
<b>For inspiration</b>	<a href="http://fesalteme.org">fesalteme.org</a>

## Summary

The programme starts with the El Salvador Table Tennis Federation, in cooperation with the National Sport Institute, identifying suitable venues in the countryside where there are not many supervised activities available for young people. The ITTF then provides equipment for these venues through sponsors, as well as delivering technical coaching courses and social education to the programme coaches. The Japanese International Cooperation Agency and the Japanese embassy provide financial support and Japanese volunteers to the programme, underpinning the programme with operational security for the future. Coaches for each venue are hired to deliver weekly table tennis lessons at the venues. At the same time, social education is provided to the participants on a different value or topic every month.

Each venue regularly hosts exhibitions where national junior team members perform exhibition matches. These players act as role models for the participants and allow them to witness the sport being played at a high level in their own personal surroundings. At the end of each year, the programme culminates in a weekend festival where all participants gather together, meet one another and play table tennis.

## Keys to success

### Focus on areas where there are no sports opportunities

This project specifically targets the countryside areas in El Salvador where young people have little or no access to sport. Table tennis lends itself well to being played in small spaces and where people can gather in a community setting. By giving participants an alternative recreational option, the programme aims to guide them away from the more dangerous lifestyle choices that have been commonly associated with the youth of these communities in the past.

### Inclusivity and social engagement

The programme places a high emphasis on bringing as many local youngsters in the community together as possible. In the El Salvadorian countryside, it can be difficult to find a communal gathering place for young people where they can meet and socialise. Furthermore, the sporting and social programmes that are put in place by the coaches and staff focus on engaging as many of the participants as possible in an equal way, regardless of their sporting ability. By making participants feel welcome and engaged, the likelihood of them going down a more dangerous path is reduced.

### Combining sports education with values for life

The project is split between delivering sport-orientated programmes and delivering social education programmes. The sports programmes focus on delivering table tennis coaching and practice from trained coaches, as well as continually providing new and updated equipment for venues and participants. The social education programmes are delivered at the venues at the same time as the sport programmes. This ensures that participants are fully engaged with the social aspect of the programme and not only the sporting one. This is critical to teaching participants about the dangers of anti-social lifestyle choices.



## Sport for All objectives

### Promote sport and physical activity

El Salvador has the 14th highest mortality rate in the world and the prevalence of diabetes is continually increasing, with El Salvador now in the top 25% of worst affected countries globally. The promotion of physical activity is critical to tackling these problems and the project aims to do just that. By giving participants the ability to not only become physically active, but also to engage with their peers in a communal and safe environment, the programme is promoting the use of physical activity as a beneficial vehicle for these at-risk youngsters across the country.

### Support active societies

El Salvador is one of the poorest countries in the Americas and the countryside areas are particularly disadvantaged in terms of the level of isolation, poverty and crime. These challenges directly prohibit the widespread practice of sport and physical activity, especially compared with urban centres. For this reason, Dream Building El Salvador focuses specifically on these areas. The programme focuses on developing participant skills and opening them up to role models and higher standards of sport through national team exhibitions and invited guests. New and functional equipment is also installed, providing these communities with a basic sporting infrastructure to be enjoyed by all.

### Provide equal access to sport

The programme specifically focuses on areas where there is little or no access to sport for the community. The topology and weather of the El Salvadorian countryside prohibits the practice and enjoyment of many sports by its inhabitants. One of the unique advantages of table tennis is the ability to play the sport without the need for large open spaces, suitable weather and large numbers of participants or capital investments. Dream Building leverages these advantages.

## How is the programme communicated?

The programme promotes itself to potential participants through community channels such as local youth centres or schools. This is the most effective form of communication for the project as all venues are in small villages in the countryside. The project also engages in some social and print media communications.

## How is the programme evaluated?

The programme is evaluated quarterly by the General Coordinator who is joined by a Sport for All representative from the national government. The ITTF also quantitatively monitors the programme on an annual basis by employing template evaluation sheets.



“We are receiving lots of phone calls from municipalities willing to join the programme, more than we can manage. We are reaching the kind of communities that normally we could not.”

Dream Building General Coordinator



## Join the sporting society!

Globally, 1 in 4 adults is not active enough and more than 80% of the world's adolescent population is insufficiently physically active (World Health Organization). Let's reverse the trend and get moving.



### Promote sport and physical activity

Recent changes in leisure and work practices, diet and a host of other trends has led to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle amongst the world's population. Sport for all programmes aim to promote sport and physical activity to mitigate the negative effects associated with these developments.



### Improve public health and well-being

Sport and physical activity plays an important role in making societies healthier, happier and safer into the future. Successful sport for all projects help to stimulate these common benefits across entire communities.



### Support active societies

Active societies involve many stakeholders such as parents, coaches, schools, local clubs, sports organisations, event organisers and grassroots activities, to name but a few. They can all be hugely influential in promoting healthier lifestyles within a community. Programmes that support and reinforce their efforts are vital for the encouragement and promotion of active societies around the world.



### Provide equal access to sport

Every member within a community should have equal opportunity to live an active and healthy lifestyle. Effective grassroots programmes place a heavy emphasis on ensuring that all of their participants can enjoy this opportunity regardless of physical condition, race, gender, social conditions, geographical location or otherwise.



### Foster Olympic legacy

The Olympic Games provide a source of inspiration and a vibrant expression of the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. This unique power can energise communities to develop projects enabling and inspiring people to become and stay physically active into the future.

## Become a key player in your community

A useful platform has been designed for organisations across the Olympic Movement that are managing Sport for All programmes, providing them with the knowledge, understanding and tools needed to improve existing programmes worldwide, as well as to create new ones.

**Get inspired** by more than 45 projects around the world

**Learn more** about best practices with our toolkit

**Create your project** based on proven academic research and experience of organisations

**Share your experience** and lead the way to inspire more projects

**Connect with a vast network** fueled by inspired partners

### Find more information

- Sports and Active Society Programmes
- A Guide to Implementation
- [www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org)
- [activesociety@olympic.org](mailto:activesociety@olympic.org)