

THE ROLE OF CISM TO FACILITATE BETTER COMMUNICATION AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Brigadier JANSEN (South Africa)

INTRODUCTION

1. The motivation to present the current paper was activated by the sole focus area of the aim, viz
"The aim of the symposium is to provide the participants with ideas and models regarding the universal character of CISM and its role in a better understanding between people of all regions".
2. This aim can be approached from different angles to indicate the dynamic role of CISM. During 1997 the Eastern and Southern regions (ESALO) experienced one facet of this interaction through the process of joint planning.
3. This paper will discuss how the people from different regions can reach a better understanding of each other through joint strategic planning. It will show how communication and mutual understanding can be achieved by the discussions, reasoning and conflict resolution which is part of strategic planning.

AIM

4. The aim of the paper is to indicate how better communication and understanding can be facilitated by joint strategic planning in the sport environment.

MISUNDERSTANDING, MISCONCEPTIONS AND CONFLICT

5. The Eastern and Southern regions of Africa are well known for their history of conflict and disruption in the past. Embedded in peoples' minds are the impression of war and destruction and the basis of numerous misconceptions and stereotypes. This atmosphere is not conducive for understanding and acceptance between people. Yet there are areas where people are prepared and able to link up with each other and explore the potential of cooperation and joint ventures. In this regard sport is one of the strongest and most acceptable factors. It provides topics of mutual interest and opportunity to observe other peoples' cultures, beliefs and value systems. Contact on the sport field or through sport administration leads to shared experiences which are much stronger than imagined perceptions.

THE LINK BETWEEN JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING AND BETTER COMMUNICATION AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PEOPLE

6. Two main links are indicated.

a. Formal Link

i. In order to do strategic planning different approaches, models must theories can be adopted, but in principle the following main activities take place:

(1) An *analysis* of the situation. The « situation » can be subdivided into the internal and external environment which influences the particular organisation. Aspects like the past, present and the future is explored to establish the strong points, weak points, opportunities and threats. All the available information resources are utilised to build a clear picture which is the foundation of strategic decisions. The informal resources which are very helpful are statistics, trends, available infrastructure, political considerations, economic/financial capabilities, social/cultural sensitivities and safety conditions. In order to execute the abovementioned steps, the different people gather and share their view on the situation. They have the opportunity to identify those factors which are of mutual interest, they share common problems and stimulate each other to identify creative solutions to problems. This process creates an opportunity to understand each other.

(2) A *statement* of those activities that will be the focus of attention in the future. If people want to work together and achieve meaningful goals they must have the same focus. This principle of « unity of effort » is a well-known principle of war. To establish the unity of effort it is necessary to formulate the joint focus. This is achieved by formulating the following concepts which are accepted worldwide:

(a) *A vision*. This is an idealistic statement of a future condition which motivates people to achieve it.

(b) *Mission*. The mission is a description of the business of the organisation. It identifies the major focus areas which should be addressed.

(c) *Aim*. The aim is a one line summary of the mission which provides the core of the strategy.

(d) *Strategic issues*. This is the questions that should be answered to overcome difficulties.

(e) *Goals*. These are the main themes that must be achieved in order to reach the mission.

Formulating these concepts create a future orientated approach in sport administration. When the group work together to identify their future vision, mission, aim, strategic issues and goals a mutual frame of reference is established. Buying into a joint approach to the future, joins people and empower them to work together, knowing where they are going.

(3) A *plan* which identifies the actions and responsibilities that are necessary to be successful in the future.

On the formal level the strategic planning therefore joins people and takes them through a thinking process which creates mutual understanding. There is a well-known saying: « *The prove of the pudding is in the eating* ». If any organisation plans on a strategic level but does not have the capability to execute the strategic plans, it is a waste of time. The plan spells out the actions, responsibilities and control mechanism which must be followed to answer the strategy. This asks personal commitment and energy to work towards success.

b. Informal Link

i. The formal process results into a strategy. It is however my opinion that the main advantages are on the informal level. Here the process allows different people to work together in groups or syndicates. They share their ideas and get to know each other on a personal level. It is in this environment where friendships and longterm contacts are established. The people get the opportunity to communicate not only ideas, but also their different cultures. It allows the people to build a network which is so useful in CISM.

ii. Sport, which gives the common denominator, and therefore provides ground for conversation, is always the main concern of the activities.

ESALO STRATEGIC PLAN 27 - 29 JANUARY 1997

7. During the period 27 - 29 January 1997, ESALO embarked on a process similar to that which was discussed in the previous paragraphs. A fine result was achieved which will be the basis of future activities within ESALO. In the purpose of this paper some main features are the following:

a. Vision. The ESALO members stated a vision for themselves: *"To be the most respected region in Africa, known for the excellence in which it functions"*

b. Mission of ESALO

"ESALO will contribute to regional, continental and world peace by using sport as the communication mechanism. This contribution will depend on

- i. *the proper evaluation of needs through an effective information and communication system;*
- ii. *pro-active planning and scheduling of activities;*
- iii. *the effective utilisation of resources;*
- iv. *the upgrading of knowledge through education;*

- v. *effective cooperation;*
- vi. *the establishment of continuity in delegations; and*
- vii. *the creation of mutual trust.*

8. The two examples viz the *Vision* and the *Mission* indicate the level of joint focus created by all the delegates. This provides an opportunity to combine and coordinate effort. All the people understand what they are aiming for in ESALO.

9. As was stated in the paper, it was however the informal link which contributed to better communication and understanding between the different people of the region. People could aim their views and, through sport, learn from each other.

10. Initially the interaction between the people was little, but as the activities proceeded, the contribution, conversations and friendships grew.

SUMMARY

11. This paper indicates a clear case study of how CISM plays a role in the facilitation of better understanding between people. It also provides a role model which can be adapted to promote this worthy cause.
