Olympic Reform: Current Status and Future Steps

Peter Donnelly and Bruce Kidd
(University of Toronto, Canada)
MOMENT OF REFORM?

- In the late 1990s, the IOC underwent a key moment of reform (following Salt Lake City and Tour de France doping revelations)
- Has that moment been lost? Is it back to business as usual?
MORAL AUTHORITY OF THE IOC

It depends…

Is the IOC:

• **the Board of a quasi-transnational corporation?**
  (engaged in profit maximization while marketing the Olympic ‘brand’)

  OR

• **the leader of a social movement?**
  (whose principles were laid out by Coubertin, and are outlined in the Olympic Charter)
If the IOC represents itself as a quasi-transnational corporation:

- corporate social responsibility (CSR) -- triple bottom line:
  - profits
  - social benefits
  - environmental benefits
- the achievements of the IOC and the advances that have been made suggest that the reforms we propose are entirely feasible within the realm of CSR
If the IOC represents itself as a social movement:

- Olympic Charter (high performance sport, sport for all, education and culture) based on liberal humanitarian principles

- the achievements of the IOC and the advances that have been made suggest that the reforms we propose are entirely feasible within the philosophy of Olympism
OLYMPIC ACHIEVEMENTS

- anti-apartheid -- racial equity
- gender equity (for participation)
- a truly global movement (last 25 years)
- increased environmental responsibility
- genuine attempts to combat doping
- increased efforts in sport development (via Olympic Solidarity)
  - Olympic Truce
  - Sport for All
The 1999 Reforms

- Olympic host selection and IOC site visits
- 15 athletes elected to IOC
- Nominations Commission (IOC membership)
- 8 year terms, renewable
- IOC max. 115 members
- President 8 year term (renewable for 4)
- 15 IF, 15 NOC members + 70 individual
- Age limit lowered to 70
- Creation of Ethics Commission
- Creation of WADA
- Greater financial transparency*
- IOC Session open to media for first time
INTERNAL REFORMS

- IOC democratic structure
- IOC gender equity
- Olympic Solidarity - development initiatives
- NOC responsibilities
IOC Democratic Structure: 

Membership

In the reformed structure of IOC --

4 categories of the 115 members:

- 70 -IOC members appointed by IOC members for eight-year terms (after transition for pre-1999 members), appointed by IOC members
- 15 -IF Presidents appointed by IOC members for a term of the IF presidency
- 15 -NOC Presidents appointed by IOC members for a term of the NOC presidency
- 15 -athlete representatives, elected by fellow athletes at Summer and Winter Games for four-year terms
Recommendation

- Eliminate ‘delegation in reverse’, i.e. ‘the IOC recruits and elects its members from among such persons, as it considers qualified’ (Olympic Charter). To be considered ‘qualified’, candidates must be recommended by the Executive Board.

- Have all IOC members elected by appropriate constituencies -- why only athletes?
IOC Democratic Structure: Regional representation

- At present, 115 members / 202 NOCs:
  - ANOCA -- 53 NOCs; 15 IOC members
  - EOC -- 48 NOCs; 57 IOC members*
  - PASO -- 42 NOCs; 18 IOC members**
  - OCA -- 44 NOCs; 21 IOC members
  - ONOC -- 15 NOCs; 6 IOC members

*European overrepresentation

**6 members from 3 NA countries
Recommendation

- Improve regional representation by electing all categories of members according to quotas proportional to region and population.
IOC Democratic Structure: Accountability/recommendations

- Help IOC members become genuinely accountable to their constituencies, taking advantage of electronic technology to report and hear back.
- Create and structure major debates about democratic and other reforms, through more frequent congresses and forums.
- NOCs and IFs need to initiate similar democratic reforms with regard to elections, representation, and accountability.
IOC Gender Equity

- Significant increases in:
  - Number of Olympic events for women
  - Number of Olympic medals for women
  - Number of women participants (athletes)

- 1996 leadership targets
  - 10% IOC membership target (2001) – recently met
  - 20% IOC membership target (2005) - distant hope
  - Same targets for NOCs and IFs
Women’s events - Winter 2006

- # of women’s events increased, BUT only in parallel with increases in # of men’s events

- # of sports: F=47.6% (40/84)*
- # of medals: F=45.3% (117/258)
- # of participants: F=38.3% (1006/2633)
- 25% of countries did not send any F (20/80); 5% (4/80) sent no M

*Includes mixed events
Gender and Leadership (2006)

- 13% IOC members are women (15/115)*
- 1/15 Executive Board members**
- 1/20 IOC Commission Chairs***
- 29.3% of NOCs achieved 20% goal
- 28.6% of winter sport IFs achieved 20% goal
- Thus, 1/4 of way to 20% goal (at this rate, 30 more years to achieve 2005 / 20% goal!)
Recommendation

- Given that IOC currently controls selection and appointment of 87% of members:

- *In order to achieve gender equity in leadership, the IOC should declare that only female members can be appointed to forthcoming vacancies until the 50% equity target is achieved*
Olympic Solidarity

• Unprecedented assistance to sport development, with a growing budget:
  - US$122m. in 1997-2000
  - US$210m. in 2001-2004
  - US$244m. In 2005-2008

• Currently:
  - 45% to World Programmes (Lausanne)
  - 37% to Continental Programmes*
  - 14% supports participation at Games
  - 4% administration costs
Current World Programmes Budget

- US$47.5m. - elite athlete development
- US$24m. - coaching development
- US$25.5m. - NOC professional mgt.
- US$13.5m. - promotion of Olympic values

BUT -- although programme designed to support participation of developing nations, not clear how many $ actually go to them
Spending…

- Athlete and coach development often occurs at training centres in Western countries
- $ support Western coaches and officials travel to developing nations
- $ support development of Western style sport management systems
- 583 OS scholarship athletes in Athens (2004) -- 216 from Europe, only 95 from Africa*
- 20% of US$90m. Continental Programmes Budget goes to Europe (and COC and USOC also receive significant $ from OS)
Recommendation

- A more equitable redistribution of funds, inversely proportional to the ranking of countries according to the United Nations Development Programme
Ideology of OS

- A programme designed to alleviate the situation in many post-colonial nations may be seen as re-creating a form of colonisation.
- Current programme of aid is didactic and directive, based on the assumption that Western training, coaching and sport management are appropriate for all countries, and that the West has nothing to learn from non-Western nations.
Recommendation

- There is a need for more locally defined programmes, and more accountability for and evaluation of OS programmes
- There is a need for OS to focus on the education of grassroots leaders
- OS should create opportunities for Olympic athletes to ‘give something back to sport’ and/or their communities (cf., Kip Keino & Mike Boit in Kenya)
NOC Responsibilities

- Olympic Charter requires NOCs to be the ‘moral guardians’ of:
  
  HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT and SPORT FOR ALL in their countries

- NOCs must take on the responsibility for assessing the state of sport in their countries, and for the development of HP sport and SfA
EXTERNAL REFORMS

- Children in sport
- Fair labour practices (wages and working conditions, equity, and environmental considerations)
- Health and safety of athletes
- Social impact and equity assessments for host cities
Children in sport

- Those institutions who claim moral authority in sport should follow the UN in recognising that adults and the state have a ‘duty of care’ to the welfare of children.

- The IOC is ideally situated to follow its work on racial and gender equity, and to make the welfare of children in sport the next moral campaign.

- The IOC should use its power of persuasion to require NOCs and IFs to recognise childhood as a period of growth and development.
Fair Labour Practices

- Governance of sport = IFs (+NFs)+MSOs
- Selection of uniforms, equipment and services to be based on fair labour practices: fair wages and working conditions, equity, and environmental considerations
- Selection of sponsoring corporations to be based on fair labour practices, equity, and environmental considerations (in both manufacturing and advertising)
QuickTime™ and a TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor are needed to see this picture.
Athletes’ Health & Safety

- change emphasis of sport medicine
  - from rehabilitation to prevention
- change approach to doping
  - from punitive to health and safety of athlete
- change age limits
  - to more realistically reflect childhood/youth as a time of growth and development
- change approaches to training
  - with health a safety of athletes in mind (rather than a survivalist mentality without regard for those who do not survive)
Impact & Equity Assessments

- Grandiose claims made for hosting Olympics
- Outcomes vary greatly from city to city
- Claims have no relevance unless subject to independent and transparent assessment involving pre- and post- tests for **social** and **environmental** impacts, and for evidence of greater **equity**
“Essential Missions” of IOC

- The promotion of women in sport
- The protection of athletes
- Development through sport
- The promotion of sustainable development
- Respect for the Olympic Truce
Jacques Rogge (www.olympic.org)

- “The IOC and the sports movement in general have a social responsibility -- to provide access to sports practice [SfA], and in so doing to spread the values of sport to all sections of society.”

- ‘The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity’ (Olympic Charter).