

## **SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF SPORT IN KOSOVO**

### **RADIO SCRIPT**

#### **NARRATOR**

The World Cup is a time for excitement. It's all about fanfare, and competition, and national pride. But it's also about peace and the power of sport to unite people from all parts of the globe.

Robert Sorenson is the deputy chief of the UN Mission in Kosovo, or UNMIK.

#### **ROBERT SORENSON, UNMIK**

Sport is a powerful tool to bring people together while promoting mutual respect and the ideals of fraternity, tolerance and justice. It also has historically played an important role in all societies. Sport has a unique power to attract, mobilize and inspire. By its very nature, sport is about participation. It is about inclusion and citizenship. It stands for human values, such as respect for the opponent, acceptance of rules, teamwork, and fairness -- all of which are principles which are also contained in the UN Charter.

#### **NARRATOR**

The connection between sport and peace has been highlighted by UN officials across the world, including Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

#### **BAN KI-MOON**

Sport can be used to bridge cultural, religious, ethnic and social divides.

#### **NARRATOR**

UNMIK's Robert Sorenson recently inaugurated a sports field in western Kosovo for children of all ethnic backgrounds.

#### **ROBERT SORENSON, UNMIK**

It was really heartening to see the kids out on the field, playing together, without any regard to their ethnic backgrounds. It made no difference. What they were interested in was just playing the games and having a good time and getting to know one another through the games.

#### **NARRATOR**

In addition to funding the sports field, UNMIK supported a civil society project called "Sport4Peace," which culminated in a football tournament for two hundred children from six ethnic groups. UNMIK supports projects like these to promote reconciliation and build confidence among different communities in Kosovo. But ultimately, such ties can only be strengthened by the people themselves. Radio Ophelia was at both events, and talked to young participants about how sport could bring them together.

### **INTERVIEWS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

#### **Blerta**

All people of the world can play football regardless of race, gender or anything else. Everyone is equal in football.

**Olti**

When we play a game, we shake each other's hands at the end. And that way, we become friends.

**Stefan**

When we play football, we start interacting with each other, and that's how I get new friends. Sport is a good way to bring people from different communities together.

**Aleksa**

I like to play sports because we meet kids from other communities. We relate to each other, and that inspires me.

**NARRATOR**

UNMIK's Robert Sorenson has seen that children from all over Kosovo have at least one thing in common. They speak the language of sport.

**ROBERT SORENSON, UNMIK**

You know, there's a myth in Kosovo that kids don't communicate with one another if they're from different ethnic groups. There is a thought that a Serb kid can't really talk to an Albanian kid, that they don't know the language and sense they're completely separate. But you get these kids on a playing field, particularly young kids, and it's amazing, they end up communicating with one another and sometimes, surprisingly, they do know words of each other's languages. But there's also the language of sport and how to play sports that really goes forward, and you develop contacts that way and those contacts can be so important, developing greater mutual respect, understanding and, frankly, knowing that people are different but we're all the same as well.