Bartel Berkhout

The National Sports Agreement

A new radical and integrated Dutch approach to make sport enjoyable and accessible for everyone, everywhere.
Bartel Berkhout:
How can we use the power of sport to accelerate social initiatives and sustainable development goals?

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Introduction: Dutch/Japanese collaboration

• In November 2015 SPORTSINQ joined the Dutch trade mission to Japan led by Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte. During this mission extensive talks were held both with the Japanese Olympic Committee and the TOKYO2020 organization.

• We elaborated in particular on the definition and practical implication of the theme’s of “sports & sustainability”, “Social Impact” “sports leadership” and “Urban Vitality”

PM’s Rutte and Abe agreeing on collaboration to a successful organization of the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo (10-11-2015). See also Joint Statement
The Netherlands: one connected urban area

- 17,1 million inhabitants
- 390 communities
- 28,000 amateur sports clubs
- 150,000 amateur sports managers
- 5,100,000 and 50,000 disabled members
- 41,543 KM² Netherlands → 1% is sports
- 377,972 KM² Japan

The Hague

Amsterdam

Rotterdam
DNA of Netherlands: for centuries villages needed to work together in order to build dykes and prevent water fluiding in.
Sports in The Netherlands

- More than 9.4 million Dutch people engage in sport every week.
- 28,000 sports clubs and 6,000 businesses offering sports and exercise services.
- Magnificent sports facilities and organize fantastic sporting events thanks to the involvement of hundreds of thousands of volunteers. Bringing sport close to people. Making it accessible. In all: The Dutch sports infrastructure and culture is unique in the world.
However, sports in The Netherlands is changing

...and success is not a given.

- Although things are going well, at the same time there are concerns and wishes.
- Children’s motor skills have declined and there are groups of people who never engage in sport.
- Sports facilities often stand idle, not every spectator knows how to behave respectfully
- and the traditional sports clubs are experiencing increasing pressure due to declining numbers of members and volunteers.
Bigger challenges of The Netherlands

- Ageing population with related issues like loneliness (social inactivity), dementia like proper elderly care
- Obesitas and overweight among all ages
- Urbanisation and different ways of exercising sports
- Individualism
Smart cities and sports

Key question: What makes a city a real smart city?

We believe it’s place where every person has a lifetime of healthy living with access to enjoyable sport and exercise. Without any restriction in terms of age, physical or mental health, ethnic background, sexual orientation or social position.
The national sports agreement

That is why the Minister of Sport, the Municipalities and sports federations (Olympic Committee) have joined forces. They have concluded a National Sports Agreement together with the provincial governments, numerous social organizations and companies. For the first time in history. 6 pillars.

1. Inclusive sports
2. Sustainable sports
3. Vital providers
4. Positive sports culture
5. Enjoying exercise from an early age
6. High Performance sports as inspiration
1. Inclusive sports

Every Dutch person should have a lifetime of enjoyable sport and exercise. Without any restriction in terms of age, physical or mental health, ethnic background, sexual orientation or social position. That should be self-evident. We will remove any hindrances which people are currently experiencing in terms of engaging in sport.
An example; hockey club Kampong in Utrecht

- Omni sports clubs
- Elderly people are welcome
- (Mentally) disabled people are welcome
- Connected with art and culture of the city
- New type of volunteers
- New ways of partnerships with businesses and bank
- Effective and shared use of all stadiums and facilities
2. Sustainable Sports

In the Netherlands we want to have a properly functioning and sustainable sports infrastructure. This not only means sports fields, swimming pools, sports centers and clubhouses, but also the municipal park and the local football pitch.

Wherever people engage in sport and exercise, facilities have to be properly organized.
Urban sports, e-sports and Walking Football
3. Vital providers

We want to make sports and exercise providers future proof so that sport and exercise are and remain accessible for everyone. Not every sports provider currently knows how to respond to developments such as ageing, individualization and digitisation. Partly as a result of this, a quarter of all associations have seen member numbers drop in recent years, and many associations are also facing a shortage of trainers.
Example hiking websites and apps
4. Positive sports culture

Sport has to be fun, safe, fair and carefree. This is a joint responsibility. Fun is the foundation for a lifetime engagement in sport.

In years gone by almost 60 percent of all sports associations have been working hard to create an enjoyable and safe sporting environment.

We want to ensure that all sports clubs focus on creating a positive sports culture, that trainers, teachers and instructors regard the welfare of children as more important than winning and that parents and guardians who spectate behave as positive supporters.
5. Enjoying exercise from an early age

Sports and exercise are no longer such automatic elements of children’s daily lives as they used to be. In 2016 researchers established that the majority of children aged between 4 and 11 year only play outside for between three and seven hours a week and that their motor skills were lower than in 2006.

There are all kinds of causes for this which include digitization, urbanization and too few safe play areas. However, the reticent and careful attitude of many parents and guardians when it comes to playing outside also plays a role.
Creating role models and heroes

- How can we use athletes and coaches in the process of creating (and enhancing) sports ecosystems and to create a better bond with public and federations? And what can different countries learn from each other? To achieve this education should focus on:

  - Understanding the interconnections of systems.
  - Think globally and toward the future.
  - Lead by example in your actions.
Can this approach be translated into Japan?

- Yes, but situational circumstances must be taken into consideration like the typical Japanese culture and DNA (traditions, families, hierarchy)
Thank you!