

# Schools lead the way in Pope



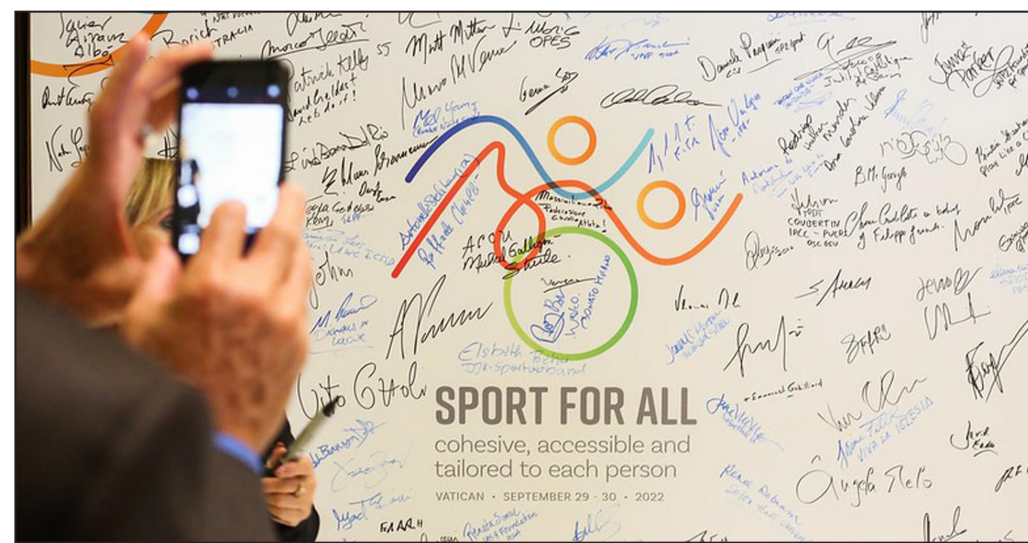
Sports action



David Geldart meeting with Pope Francis



David Geldart signing the declaration



The signed declaration

MEMBER schools of the Bambisanani Partnership from the Nkandla region of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa and from Leeds in the UK have become the first schools in the world to pledge their support to Pope Francis' global appeal to make sport more cohesive, accessible and inclusive.

At the Global Sport for All Summit last September, Pope Francis outlined the potential of sport as a positive force in society.

The summit was a multi-faith event attended by 250 delegates from 40 countries representing the world's leading sporting organisations and practitioners. The aim was to discuss and promote the social and inclusive dimension of sport in society.

It was in response to Pope Francis' encouragement of sport that is socially responsible and his appeals to foster sport as a means of human, educational and spiritual growth.

The summit produced a declaration calling on all those involved to commit to making sport more cohesive, accessible and tailored to each person. With the momentum and guidance of the experts convened at the summit, participants pledged to walk together – communitar – to achieve common goals and aspirations.

On the final day of the summit, delegates signed the Sport for All Declaration in the presence of Pope Francis. As such, signatories committed to bringing the declaration to life.

Fundamental to this task is the understanding that the declaration is not just a statement of principles, but a Declaration-Action, an invitation to concrete actions; using the power of sport for the future of society. Subsequently, an online version of the declaration has become available to sign.

In his speech to delegates, Pope Francis said: "I encourage you to strive to make sport a home for everyone, something open and welcoming."

"In this home, never lose the family spir-

it, for in this way, we may find brothers, sisters and friends in the world of sport. I am close to you in this mission; the Church supports you in this educational and social commitment."

The first group of schools from the UK to sign the declaration was The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust of 13 schools from Leeds, including individual commitments from high school, St Mary's, Menston (Bambisanani Partnership Founding School), and primary schools: St Mary's, Horsforth, St Joseph's, Otley; St Joseph's, Knaresborough, and St Joseph's, Harrogate. The first schools in South Africa to sign were Mnyakanya High School (Bambisanani Founding School) and Vumahlamvu Primary School.

The Bambisanani Partnership charity works with schools in the UK and South Africa using the power of sport to promote education, health, global citizenship and leadership; bringing young people from both countries together in order "to work together and learn together".

The charity has gained international acclaim for its pioneering work and its Founder David Geldart was a delegate at the summit.

David said: "It was a great honour to attend this landmark summit and, of course, to meet Pope Francis who truly believes in the potential of sport as a force for good in the world."

"I am absolutely delighted that our schools from Leeds and the remote Nkandla region of South Africa have become the first schools in their respective countries, and indeed the world, to sign the declaration and show their commitment to the power of sport within education. Hopefully more schools throughout the world will now follow."

"Organisations and individuals from around the world have now signed the declaration."

"First to sign the declaration at the summit was Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee, so we are

# Francis' call for Sport for All



Sport bringing countries together

in good company. "The potential of high quality, inclusive physical education and sports programmes in our schools, colleges and universities to make a unique and significant contribution in this area is enormous."

"Educational establishments throughout world that value sport and believe passionately that it should genuinely be for all; cohesive, accessible and inclusive, should sign the declaration, they could add so much to what needs to be a 'team effort'."

"I would love to see a network of schools, colleges and universities through the world commit to this challenge and work collaboratively as advocates to share best practices, celebrate success and support each other in solidarity."

"In our small way the Bambisanani Partnership has got the ball rolling. If you share this vision of sport, you are very much invited to play."

Darren Beardsley, CEO of the Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust, said: "As an Academy Trust of 13 schools, we are delighted to be able to support the Sport for All summit declaration."

"We witness the power of sport in our schools on a daily basis and how it can be used to enhance the wider skills and development of our pupils."

"Sport plays an important role in social cohesion and this is particularly important when we take into account the challenges faced by wider society in today's world."

"The declaration highlights the importance of sport being cohesive, accessible and tailored."

"Our schools are welcoming organisations, where we work with our communities to meet the needs of all individuals, therefore our values and mission align with that of the declaration."

"Finally, the declaration is a call to Declar-Action and we are privileged to be part of such a dynamic agreement."

Those who wish to support declaration can sign it on the website sportforall.va



Bambisanani sporting activities



Children take part in a running session