



Social Action Commission

FIDE Social Action Commission

Minutes of meeting on Thursday 8th September, 2016

At the Fairmont Hotel, Baku

Chairperson: B. Marinello (USA)

Present: U. Vogel (NAU), R. Haring (USA), F. Jablonicky (SVK), T. Luther (GER), G. Wastell (AUS), K. Bonham (AUS), S. Johnson (TTO), D. Ambarukmi (INA), P. Spiller (NZL), S. Noori (IRI), M. Murphy (ISV), M. Castro Solano (CRC), G. Bendana (NCA), E. Dosumbetov (KGZ), M. Turpanov (KGZ), T. Hongwei (CHN), P. van Hoolandt (MNC), B. Heddia Abdellatif (TUN), A. Zaheerudeen (AFG), P. Klerides (CYP)

WELCOME

Beatriz Marinello, Chairwoman, extended greetings to those members present. She asked for Robert Katende, to be excused as he was unable to attend the meeting. She also introduced, Paris Klerides, as a Council member.

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

Beatriz stated the role of the Social Action Commission and described it as the next movement for chess, similar to Chess in Schools. She was very optimistic that the projects undertaken by the commission will have significant impact on chess throughout the world.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Beatriz went through the report in Robert Katende's absence. The report focused on the work of the Commission from 2014-2016.

Uganda

The Commission has been doing work in Uganda for the past 3 years. This work includes the support of the 'The Children of Gulu Chess Program' where chess is being taught in 5 centres. They have collaborated with an International Organisation, Sport Outreach, to execute this particular programme in Uganda. Earlier in 2016, the SAC members, Beatriz, Robert and Paris, together with GM Thomas Luther, conducted training sessions in Kampala and Gulu. During this trip they:

- Delivered chess instruction to children
- Conducted a FIDE trainer seminar for the award of NI and DI titles, which was attended by persons from 5 Federations in East Africa.
- Brought chess sets, boards and demo boards

The conditions of the children and participants in Uganda were very extreme, e.g. no water, no furniture, electricity; but despite this, there was great enthusiasm by the children and the teachers, to learn chess and they were always in full attendance.

One of the additional outcomes from this trip was to secure sponsorship for selected children to go to school so that they can have even greater opportunity in the future.

It is intended that support and sponsorship will be pursued to further develop an Academy for Chess in Kampala, which will also provide some accommodation, food etc for children. This will be done in collaboration with Sports Outreach.

Disabled children

Other training was done for disabled children in Kampala. Teachers for these special kids were trained on how to teach chess to the disabled.

Beatriz stressed that these programmes can only be successful once the whole community and families are engaged.

Cameroon

Meetings were held with the Minister of Women and Family Affairs. A FIDE Trainers seminar was conducted as well as Chess Instruction for teachers in collaboration with the Continent and the Trainers' Commission. The Cameroon Chess Federation received chess sets and a demonstration board from the SAC.

Similar to Uganda, it is important to find an International Organisation to assist the work of the Federation and the SAC in Cameroon in order for these projects to be sustainable.

Smart Girl Programme

One of the members present asked about the Smart Girl Programme. Beatriz described it as a programme done in collaboration with the UN Women's Organisation to empower women and girls, where FIDE SAC provided the training, free of charge, to teach girls chess. The other, on the ground costs, would be covered by the federation or organiser.

Queen of Katwe

The trailer of this movie was shown. It is expected to bring increased recognition and popularity to the sport of chess. There have been several rave reviews of the movie, which is expected to come out later on in September.

OTHER RELATED PROJECTS

Argentina

A programme is currently underway in Argentina for the training of senior persons. It is funded by the government of Argentina. The main objective is to address the problems that will face with an gaining population, and more specifically, issues with dementia.

Beatriz created an organisation, 'Checkmating Dementia', which has as its main goal, the use of chess to develop brain activity in seniors. The organisation is now seeking funding primarily to do research on the impact of chess on Alzheimer's and dementia.

Argentina has been working on Social Chess Activities for several years and has asked to collaborate with the SAC.

Chile

SAC has signed an agreement with the Government of Chile to embark upon a programme which integrates children with senior citizens to play chess. This programme consists mainly of training for trainers and organisers.

Trinidad and Tobago

SAC supported a programme to teach chess to children at risk at the Credo Development Centre. This programme initially involved the teaching chess to girls over a 10 week period. However based on discussions with the administrators, it was changed to include boys and was delivered over a 9 month period.

Nepal

The Federation conducted a chess tournament for children in orphanages which was very successful but there were some major setbacks due to the destructive earthquake in 2015.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS

- There is potential for other projects in Panama and Nicaragua.
- Meeting participants were encouraged to send emails to the SAC if they had any projects that they were considering in their countries.
- Chess training programmes have been introduced in schools for minorities in Slovakia, which seem to having some favourable outcomes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SAC

The objectives of the SAC were highlighted. These include:

1. SAC shall promote the use of chess as an equalizer, especially in the areas of women's equality and bridging the gap between social and economic differences that impact people across the world.
2. SAC shall promote the use of chess as an aid for persons at risk from dementia, Alzheimer's Disease and other mental illnesses particularly among seniors
3. SAC shall promote measures that utilise chess to help children at risk.
4. SAC shall liaise with organisations with similar objectives.

Two videos were played:

- A short clip of the video on Robert Katende's life.
- The project initiated by Paris Klerides, Cyprus, 'Together we Can Do More'

In conclusion, Beatriz reiterated that the commission's projects have created a positive impact and they will continue to do the much needed work for social improvement.

Thomas Luther congratulated Beatriz and the SAC Commission in general for the excellent work they are doing and were applauded by the members present.

ACTIONS GOING FORWARD

The meeting generated a great deal of interest and persons were willing to assist the SAC Commission.

- Patrick Van Hoolandt volunteered his services to teach chess for any countries where French is spoken.
- Ulrike Vogel, Germany, volunteered to look for organisations which may be able to provide very much needed resources, mainly volunteers and financial to help the work of the SAC. A suggestion was to target European students, e.g. those in Germany, who have a history of helping out in underprivileged nations in Africa.
- Abigail Tian, council member from China, promised to secure chess sets for schools/projects under the SAC programme as she was very moved by the work that was being done. Abigail also suggested that the ACP be engaged as there is more to chess than just being a top player. They too should try to be part of such a noble initiative.
- A plan should be developed for the SAC activities which can be shared with potential sponsors and stakeholders.
- DGT committed to provide chess sets to the SAC in support of its work.

Beatriz Marinello
Chairwoman

Paris Klerides
Commission Member