
Social Chess Report

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Chess: Advocating for Social Improvement

The concept of "Social Chess" is not new. For many years we have been exploring this area in relation with children-at-risk, prison chess, alzheimers, as well as other areas that affect global chess communities.

As we strive to promote chess as a sport, we must not forget the social impact chess has had and continues to have on our communities.

Within the World Chess Federation (FIDE), Mr. David Jarrett has been working in this area for a long time and in 2010, our FIDE President nominated GM Darcy Lima as an advisor for Social Chess Projects. However, it doesn't start or stop there.

We should encourage National Federations, Foundations, national and international programs to come together and joint efforts that are inspired by common goals.

At the FIDE Presidential Board meeting, held in Al Ain, UAE in February 2012, FIDE officially approved a program which I introduced that would begin work in this area from FIDE's perspective. A program that aimed to create and structure a Social Chess Commission.

Making it Happen

Since February 2012, I am happy to report that FIDE has made a partnership alliance with United Nations for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, known as U.N. Women.

We are currently working on the development stage of two projects related to Chess-for-Equality. This strategy will allow us to build new connections, and introduce chess to the under-represented community of young girls.

Many of the events and projects throughout our communities embrace the social aspects of chess.

Another example, which was not included in the proposal approved by the FIDE Presidential Board is, "**Chess for Peace**".

FIDE in conjunction with the "**Peace and Sports**" organization hosted two events, one in Colombia and another in Palestine. GM Alexandra Kosteniuk and Mr. David Jarrett were instrumental in the realization of these events.

Additionally, at the 2012 SportAccord Convention in Quebec, Canada, the winners of the "Spirit of Sport" award were announced. First among three prize winners was, "Chess That Brings Freedom", a FIDE and Brazilian Social Project, which was created by educator Charles Moura Netto with GM Darcy Lima serving as a consultant.

Continuing Efforts

There is a lot of work to be done. Many countries have not even begun to lay the ground work for such projects. The FIDE Social Chess project belongs to the FIDE Family and we can all contribute to it's success!

The main areas identified as part of the proposal approved by the FIDE Presidential Board in February 2012 are:

Chess as a Powerful Tool for Prevention

1. Chess for Drug Prevention
2. Chess and the Center for Disease Control
3. Prison Chess

We have the scientific backing to demonstrate that chess impacts the part of the brain related with Self-Control. It's difficult to break a habit, it's easier to replace it, but it's even better to offer positive alternatives for children and adults at risk.

Chess: Reducing the Risk of Dementia, Alzheimer's and other Mental Illness

Scientists have shown a link between playing chess and reducing the risk of dementia, Alzheimer's and other mental illnesses.

In a study reported in The New England Journal of Medicine, officials said that people over age 75 who engaged in leisure activities such as chess were less likely to develop signs of dementia than others.

Playing games such as chess stimulates areas of the brain that would normally atrophy with age. People who reported playing board games such as chess were 35% less likely to develop dementia than those who said they engaged in those activities only rarely.

Chess for Equality

Chess equalizes backgrounds and builds self esteem. Many organizations are working to bridge the gap between the social and economic differences that impact people across the world. With chess, positive and meaningful work is taking place around the world. If the benefits that chess provides are actively promoted with expanded joint efforts - imagine the impact!

FIDE Social Chess is extremely important because it's main objective is to promote positive social change with chess by expanding it's reach and partnering with organizations that have already made a positive impact on our planet. We are breaking ground and it has just begun.

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