

## MEDIA RELEASE

### IOC and Reliance Foundation sign agreement to advance Olympic values education across India

**Mumbai, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023:** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) with the Olympic Museum has aligned with Reliance Foundation to build on the success of the Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP) in India and signed a new cooperation agreement. It underscores the organisations' shared priority to promote Olympic values through sport among young people.



The new cooperation was agreed upon by IOC President Thomas Bach and Nita Ambani, IOC Member in India and Reliance Foundation Founder Chairperson, during a visit to the Reliance Foundation Young Champs (RFYC) football academy in Mumbai. During the ceremony, President Bach and Mrs. Ambani exchanged pennants representing OVEP and Reliance Foundation and joined students in leaving their handprints on a new Olympic Values Pledge Wall, marking a commitment to be a positive role model both in sports and in day-to-day life.

“Sport has the ability to transform lives of young people,” said **President Bach**. “We welcome Reliance Foundation joining as an OVEP implementation partner and we look forward to bringing the Olympic values to even more students, first in the Mumbai area and then hopefully across the state of Maharashtra. Respect, friendship, fair play and solidarity are values that young people can benefit from and imbibe for life. And the most important aspect is solidarity with one and all.”

“The word ‘together’ in the Olympic motto, *Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together*, expresses this sentiment of solidarity. With the OVEP programme, we want to reach out to all children and young people, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds who may not always have access to sport and healthy lifestyles,” added **President Bach**.

“Reliance Foundation is delighted to partner with the IOC for OVEP and we are really looking forward to this partnership,” said **Mrs. Nita Ambani, Founder Chairperson of Reliance Foundation**. “OVEP brings both sports and education together. With this partnership, we can hope to positively impact the 250 million school-going children of India, reaching out to the remotest villages and regions of India, giving them options of a more disciplined, healthier, fitter and more wholesome lifestyle. Children are our future and we need to give them the right to education and the right to play.”

To mark the occasion, around 80 RFYC students took part in games alongside more than 100 children from Reliance Foundation schools and their NGO partners. Together, they depicted the integration of Olympic values into both modern and traditional Indian sports such as kho-kho, gully cricket and malkhamb.



OVEP is an initiative led by the Olympic Museum that advances the IOC's Olympism365 strategy, which aims to increase access to sport and bring the health and societal benefits of physical activity to communities across the globe. Launched in India in 2022 with the Abhinav Bindra Foundation in the Indian state of Odisha, OVEP is one of the first major IOC projects to be implemented in India.

Just six months after introducing OVEP to Odisha students, schools reported marked increase in attendance and participation in sports, particularly among girls. The programme, now in its second year, has now reached more than 700 teachers and 250,000 children in 350 schools and expanded to the state of Assam. Once in full swing, OVEP's engagement in India is anticipated to reach around 29 million children.

### **The IOC and Reliance Foundation plan to focus on three main areas:**

- Grade-specific activities in selected schools to promote Olympism and the Olympic values and instil positive behavioural changes.
- Virtual and in-person sessions between athletes and students to promote physical activity and discuss Olympic values.
- Raise awareness of Olympic values through interactive games, quizzes and workshops at sporting and educational events.

Initiatives such as OVEP advance the IOC's commitment to raise awareness of the benefits of and access to engagement in sports activities to pursue a healthy lifestyle. For more information may be found in the Olympic Agenda 2020+5.

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