Olympic Scholarship: A Helping Hand to Olympic Hopefuls

Interview of the IOC President Jacques Rogge explaining the role of Olympic Solidarity and the importance of the scholarship programme.

Interview with the Head of Olympic Solidarity at the IOC, Olivier Niamkey.

Interview with Sabine Hazboun, Palestinian Olympic Solidarity scholarship holder competing in swimming.

Interview with Jumah Bayan, Syrian Olympic Solidarity scholarship holder competing in swimming.

Archive footage Mozambique athlete Maria Mutola winning the 800 M athletics Gold medal at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

B-roll IOC Headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Archive footage of Scholarship Holder, Mozambique athlete Maria Mutola winning the 800 M athletics Gold medal at the 2000 Sydney Olympics

© See below.

Interview with Jacques Rogge – President - International Olympic Committee

“Well Olympic Solidarity is a fund whereby we support sport development at the grassroots level in developing countries. So we detect young athletes, we bring them to sport, we build infrastructure, we start with the education of coaches, we offer scholarships to promising athletes to go and train abroad when needed, when there’s no provision in their home country. This has yielded splendid results.”

“We’ve seen this in so many athletes, you know, performing at high level, both nationally and internationally at the Olympic Games, and the testimony of these athletes is that they’d never have achieved that without the support of Olympic Solidarity. Olympic Solidarity is in fact, in many developing countries, the only sort of chance they get to develop sport.”

“The programmes work on the basis of support for sport at a very basic level. We built specific sports infrastructure, community-based sports infrastructure, we bring sport to literally millions of young kids. Naturally the most talented ones will emerge. They will be trained in more sophisticated structures. At a certain moment, it might be that there is no provision in the home country for sophisticated training methods and then we bring them abroad to a sports centre in a more developed country.”

“Well it’s very simple. Without Olympic Solidarity or without the Youth Olympic Games for some athletes there’d be no development. I mean the most famous example is Maria Mutola. She was a poor poor athlete without any possibility in her home country of Mozambique.

She was detected by Olympic Solidarity. She started training in Mozambique in her country. She then went to the US for a scholarship, and she became an Olympic champion. I mean she always says that without Olympic Solidarity, I’d never have achieved it.”

“La Solidarité Olympique est en fait un fond et une organisation qui s'occupe du développement du sport, principalement dans les pays en voie de développement. Et elle a eu des résultats extraordinaires. Si aujourd'hui il y a une participation de 204 pays et régions du monde, c'est grâce à la Solidarité Olympique. Parce qu'il y a dans le monde à cause de l'injustice entre le nord qui est riche et le sud qui est pauvre, il y a plus de 130 comités
“We have in Olympic Solidarity, five programmes specially dedicated to athletes. We try to reach athletes from various levels, starting from the grass roots, up to the elites. One example is the scholarship programme for the games, we try to help the athletes preparing to the games and we give them what we call scholarships. Basically we’re financing their training for their game for their preparation and depending on their needs we try to either just give them a financial assistance or to place them in a centre, give them a coach, whatever they need we try to accommodate that.”

“The budget of Olympic Solidarity comes from the share of the TV revenue from the Olympic Games belonging to the NOCs. So basically the money is transiting through Olympic Solidarity and that money is re-distributed to all the National Olympic Committees through various programmes. So we have programmes touching athletes but also coaches, management and the promotion of the Olympic values. In total nineteen programmes which allow us to distribute that fund equably to all the National Olympic Committees.”

“In Beijing we had a thousand and eighty eight athletes, among them five hundred and ninety one qualified and participated in the games. And we’ve been very lucky to have eighty one medals. But just a small precision, the medals are not the objective of the programme, the objective of the programme is the qualification. When an athlete gets a scholarship and qualifies, we consider that scholarship successful. And if we have a medal then it’s like a bonus.”

“We always ask them what difference the programme makes and a lot of them tell us clearly that without the scholarship they wouldn’t be able to prepare properly or to qualify. Some NOCs has as objective the qualification, their only objective is to qualify athletes, not to be invited. So they try to reach these objectives with the programmes and we hope at least that it makes a difference.”

“As you know these athletes will be the ambassador of their country, during the games. They will compete against the best athletes in the world and it’s important that they go to the game ready, ready to compete and compete with dignity. Their country needs to be proud of them, we want them to be good ambassadors and the qualification instead of the invitation is already a victory for them.”

“I was selected by the IOC, the International Olympic Committee, um, because they, they give scholarship for, for their invited countries, such as Palestine and I was selected to come here and, um, they, they selected from swimming and these sports and I’d like to thank the IOC, because it’s such a grateful opportunity that I had.”

“The facilities there for swimmers are awful, you can say they are not very good, because we… in my club we only have, er, one outdoor … one outdoor pool that’s 17 meters length, no 18, so it’s like a, a hotel room and, and, um, and we have only another, another indoor one, it’s 25 meters in length, but it’s… it was under renovation for four years and then was opened but it’s a little bit far and, yeah.”

“I’m excited, I mean, I’ve always wanted to participate or to take place just… and to represent my country of Palestine, which is nearly not, not known, um, and to take place in, in such a great event.”

“I can tell them that there are no limits and they can… and, and show the world that, in Palestine, it’s not only the, the there isn’t only a war, there’s sports as well.”

“Yes, of course it is hard because I’ve been nine months away from my, my country, but recently I, I enjoyed Easter with them, I was home for, for Easter, only for one week and then I came back home… er, here, but I… it’s all… it’s… here also feels like home but it’s hard but I prefer here because the facilities. Like, whereas here there’s a pool and there, there, there isn’t, so that’s it.”

B roll Sabine Hazboun – Palestinian Olympic Solidarity scholarship holder training in Barcelona, Spain
Interview with Jumah Bayan – Syrian Olympic Solidarity scholarship holder

“So my training in Syria, there is not too much different from here, it’s a little bit but here for sure is better. But my training in Syria its two time by day, also we do two time ‘muscle training by week. It was good but there is not so many swimmers with me, but you know here there is more swimmers with me so that’s better. And in Syria there is not too much competitions. No we don’t do too much competition but here it’s we do every week maybe.”

“But I learn very much things, I changed my technique a little bit. I take more power, I learn how to live alone, so I learn very much here things.”

“It was very hard for me, very very hard. Because you know, I don’t know French never and all the life it’s different and I was a little bit afraid. I am alone, far from my family, my friends it was very hard for me.”

“It’s a very big thing, you know the Olympic Games it’s not small thing, and it’s the dream of everyone of every sportsman. So I think very big for me, it’s my dream, it’s everything for me, yeah it means for me very things.”

“I hope to go to the semi-final, I will try, I will do all what I have. And also to do a best time for me, so that’s for this moment.”

“Yeah I like very much my life, it was very hard because you know I’m when I was thirteen years old I leave my family, I went to Damas, I live in Damas for two years. The first one year it was alone also. But the second year with my mother. After that I came here when I was sixteen years old, so I’m very happy in my life because I do very things when I was young, yeah I like it.”

B-roll Jumah Bayan – Syrian Olympic Solidarity scholarship holder training in Rouen, France

Mid shot Jumah Bayan entering swimming pool building in Rouen, France (2 x shots)
Mid shot Jumah Bayan at edge of swimming pool
Mid shot Jumah Bayan diving into pool
Mid shot Jumah Bayan swimming in pool (6 x shots)
Close up Jumah Bayan swimming pool and then underwater
Mid shot Jumah Bayan swimming in pool (2 x shots)

Archive footage of Scholarships Holder, Mozambique athlete Maria Mutola winning the 800 M athletics Gold medal at the 2000 Sydney Olympics

Mid shot Maria Mutola (MOZ) running behind Kelly Holmes (GBR) during womens 800 M final
Wide shot Maria Mutola overtakes Kelly Holmes (GBR) and wins womens 800 M final
Close up Maria Mutola celebrates with silver medalist Stephanie Graf (AUT)
Mid shot Maria Mutola celebrates holding Mozambique flag
Mid shot Maria Mutola is presented with the Gold medal on the podium (3 x shots)

B-roll of IOC Headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland

Wide shot exterior of IOC Headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland
Close up and zoom out from main entrance
Pan up statue with Olympic rings (3 x shots)
Pan right to left exterior of IOC Headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland

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