

Dear colleagues,

First of all, I would like to thank Badminton Europe Confederation and personally its President, Mr. Verpoorten, for the kind invitation to the Forum and for this opportunity to deliver my presentation.

Today I intend to widen the horizons of our knowledge about possible development pathways for badminton.

The main goal of my presentation is to convince you that badminton is much more than just sport.

For me personally, badminton provides a solution to one of the most pressing problems of global health. I am referring to progressive impairment of vision in people of all ages and, above all, in children and adolescents .

For humans, 90 percent of perception of the world normally comes through vision. Today, one-fourth of global population suffers from myopia and, by 2050, half the people on the planet totaling 4.8 billion will need glasses!

Badminton can stop this global epidemic.

Please watch a short video presentation after which I will offer brief comments on the film and make a proposal.

So, my main message is: it's time to get rid of short-sightedness in the management of badminton.

When we discuss the future of badminton and development prospects for our federations, we mainly see badminton as a professional sport.

In my opinion, this perspective is short-sighted.

I firmly believe that we must widen our horizon and see the new prospects that may be opened by the strategy of developing badminton as a grassroots sport. I am convinced that such change of the perspective will help to discover new opportunities for the development of both the national federations and professional badminton.

What am I trying to say?

Any donor or investor, be it government or private sector, would like to see maximum value obtained for every euro invested in a project. In this case, in badminton.

However, in this constantly changing world, 'value' means not only financial profit. In the modern world, the donors and investors are rather attracted by project's ability to address topical issues facing society and create positive social changes. That is the project's social impact.

It is the projects with significant social impact that have the biggest chance for development and financial support. This is true for not only sports but for all kinds of projects.

Developing badminton as a grassroots sport allows to kill two birds – or even three birds – with one stone.

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First. Promoting badminton lessons in schools and creating badminton grounds on the premises of condominiums and university campuses will be welcomed by parents and children. I am sure that it will find support from the local and regional authorities and charities. Because, above all, this is about implementing healthy lifestyles. About prevention of diseases, myopia above everything else. About reducing juvenile crime at the local level due to children becoming engaged in a sport.

Second. Expanding the grassroots base of badminton increases our chances of discovering and nurturing [нёрчрин] future stars, future Olympic champions. Hence a simple logical chain: the more people playing badminton – the more brilliant talents – the more spectators at the stadiums – the more advertising budgets – the more opportunities for national federations.

Third. Expanding the grassroots base of badminton increases general public's positive interest in our sport and, therefore, attracts governments' attention and sponsors' support. Our pilot project in Kazan has confirmed the validity of this statement.

Honestly speaking, National Badminton Federation of Russia had no money to spend on building the Badminton Centre in Kazan. Everything you have seen in my presentation – magnificent building, roomy halls, and excellent equipment – is a result of active promotion of the concept of badminton as popular grassroots sport and healthy lifestyle.

I won't tell you how many meetings had to be held by myself and my colleagues, how much effort had to be put in. The only important thing is that we managed to convince both the government bodies and the sponsors that this project will create many positive changes for the region's population, first and foremost for the youth. It took only two years to build the Center, which is a record-breaking time.

Mr. Høyer Larsen honoured the Center's inauguration with his presence. He has seen how much interest and enthusiasm was generated by this event. It is safe to say that on that day we have drawn to our sport at least one more European country. The population of Kazan exceeds 1.2 million and the population of the whole republic totals almost 4 million!

The most important thing is that we have created not only practical experience but also a well-packaged project that may be replicated not only in Russia but also in other countries.

Personally, I have set a goal for myself to do my best to ensure that similar Badminton Centres open in another 11 biggest cities of my country by 2021.

By the way, in September 2016 we will host the 14th World University Championship Badminton, which is another evidence of success of our badminton development strategy.



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To summarize, I would like to say the following.

National Badminton Federation of Russia is open for any consultations and cooperation.

For those who are willing to act outside the box and focus on expanding the grassroots base of badminton, I suggest to take on board our experience. We are ready to share it openly.

Firstly, this is the experience of promoting badminton in schools and universities.

Secondly, this is the experience of collaboration with health professionals and myopia correction centres.

Thirdly, this is the experience of collaboration with central and local public authorities.

And finally, this is the experience of collaboration with the media.

National Badminton Federation of Russia and myself are ready to collaborate with all interested national federations and with Badminton Europe Confederation.

Thank you

Mr. Sergey Shakhray's presentation