



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

INTERNATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE



CHANGE  
STARTS  
WITH  
SPORT



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# VISION

Make for an inclusive world through Para sport.

# MISSION

To lead the Paralympic Movement, oversee the delivery of the Paralympic Games, and support members to enable Para athletes to achieve sporting excellence.

# PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

IPC President Andrew Parsons on the most unique of years: from reimagining the postponed Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games and being in awe of athletes' fortitude, to navigating the Paralympic Movement through its biggest ever crisis and advancing human rights for persons with disabilities.

### HISTORIC POSTPONEMENT

The year 2020 was one like no other. Almost overnight, the whole world appeared to come to a shuddering halt as COVID-19 changed the way we all went about our daily lives.

For a time, sport became irrelevant. The priority for all was human survival as we tried to come to terms with the first global pandemic for more than century.

As the virus took hold, it soon became apparent that with limited knowledge of how the situation would evolve, the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games could not go ahead as originally planned. The Games were rightly postponed for the first time in history and thanks to the unwavering support of the Japanese government, Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee were rescheduled for one year later.

Within one week, we went from focussing on the final six months of preparations to working from home and having just 18 months to rethink and replan every element of the Paralympic Games. It was like trying to pull a U-turn in a F1 car at full speed, something that should not be attempted unless absolutely necessary.

### THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT

The pandemic and the decision to postpone Tokyo 2020 impacted everyone involved in the Paralympic Movement, none more so than the athlete community.

I remember a call with athlete representatives soon after the postponement where I heard several harrowing stories on the mental health struggles many were facing. I was also blown away by the commitment of athletes who said they were continuing to train at whatever

location they could despite the various lockdown measures. After hearing such struggles and dedication first-hand, we knew we had to find a way to deliver safe and secure Paralympic Games in 2021.

Alongside the difficult stories were the tales of heroism from the medically qualified Para athletes who had swapped their training kits for scrubs to work on the frontline of the pandemic. I was left in awe at how these amazing people had gone from preparing for the biggest sport event of their careers to saving human life.

The postponement of Tokyo 2020 and the cancellation of multiple World Para Sport events meant the IPC had to react to a sudden change in cashflow. Many forecasted revenues would be either no longer forthcoming or delayed until 2021.

The work the IPC team does helps create the platform for athletes like sisters Anaís Méndez (left) and Poeth Mendes Sanchez (right) to make history. The siblings from Ecuador compete in F20 shot put, and respectively won silver and gold at the 2019 Parapan American Games.



Thanks to a herculean effort by the whole team and cost-savings across the organisation, the IPC finished the financial year with a balanced budget achieved without the need for any external financial support, a tremendous achievement by all concerned.

By year end it was clear that while COVID-19 had impacted nearly every person on the planet, it had disproportionately impacted persons with disabilities. At a time when the world was trying to leave no-one behind, the world's largest marginalised group was experiencing growing levels of discrimination and exclusion.

In my view, this justified the need for Tokyo 2020 to go ahead in 2021; persons with disabilities needed a global platform and voice more than ever before and with the Paralympic Games we could provide just that.

### STICKING TOGETHER DURING THE HARDEST OF TIMES

"During the worst of times, you get to see who your true friends are."

This well-known saying was certainly more appropriate than ever in 2020, underling what tremendous friends, partners and stakeholders the IPC has.

In particular, the support of our commercial and broadcast partners - each of whom

was suffering their own pandemic pain - was unflinching and, if anything, it grew stronger.

The pandemic led to hardship for many of our member organisations. However, thanks to the support of Toyota, through the NPC Development Programme, and Citi, we made EUR 1.8 million of grants - the biggest amount in IPC history - available to help all our members during the most difficult of times.

Faced with the unique challenge of replanning Tokyo 2020, our relationship with the IOC grew stronger than ever with the pandemic bringing both organisations closer together. The teamwork between IPC and IOC, as well as with Tokyo 2020, was extraordinary as we created from scratch a new blueprint for how to stage the world's first and third biggest sport events during a pandemic.

### PROGRESS IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

Despite the pandemic, the IPC made strong progress in areas, advancing the review of our governance structures and ticking off several priorities from the IPC Strategic Plan 2019-2022.

Netflix movie Rising Phoenix gave a fantastic insight into the history of the Paralympic Movement and the stories of several leading Paralympians, engaging new audiences around the world.

During the year, the IPC also established historic Co-operation Agreements with the likes of the International Disability Alliance, UN Human Rights and The Valuable 500 amongst others. The IPC now has highly credible and trusted partners it can work with to advance our third strategic pillar. Such relationships provided the foundations for the IPC to launch WeThe15 in 2021, our biggest ever communications campaign to advance the human rights of the world's 1.2 billion persons with disabilities and to challenge the stigma attached to disability.

It is often said that Paralympians see challenges as opportunities to do things differently. In 2020, the pandemic meant the IPC and Paralympic Movement faced our biggest crisis to date. Yet through new ways of working and thinking, we continued to thrive as an organisation and as a Movement. I for one, have never been prouder to be President of the IPC and member of the Paralympic Movement.

**Andrew Parsons**  
IPC President

“Rethinking and replanning the Paralympic Games was like trying to pull a U-turn in a F1 car at full speed, something that should not be attempted unless absolutely necessary.”

**Andrew Parsons**  
IPC President



Although international travel was largely suspended and virtual meetings became the norm, it didn't stand in the way of Games organisation. IPC President Andrew Parsons (second right) attends online the important five-party planning meeting with Tokyo Metropolitan Governor Yuriko Koike (left) and IOC President Thomas Bach (second left), while Tokyo 2020 President Seiko Hashimoto (centre) and Olympic Minister Tamayo Marukawa (right) are at Tokyo 2020 headquarters.



# DELIVERING ON OUR PURPOSE

CEO Mike Peters on how our dedicated IPC staff met the challenges of the pandemic head on, remained focussed on members and the Games, and built strong future foundations.

In preparing for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, I discovered several unique Japanese words that seemed appropriate to the exceptional situation 2020 presented us. One beautiful word that stayed with me was 'ikigai', which asks what's your purpose in life, why do you get up in the morning?

Amidst all the uncertainty of 2020, having a sense of purpose was never more important in the history of the Paralympic Movement, and I could not be prouder of our staff whose diligence ensured that a challenging year became a triumph.

In 2020, every organisation across the world was forced to reassess its business - the IPC was no different. Given that a critical part of our Mission is to oversee the delivery of the Paralympic Games, the decision taken in March 2020 to postpone them altered everything.

Across the IPC business every department was impacted, from operations, membership and classification, who had to re-plan the logistics of the Games for our members and their athletes, to legal and finance, where revised contracts and delayed revenue streams meant challenging new workflows.

A large amount of work was undertaken in the first half of 2020 that did not generate immediate financial gain for the IPC; it did, however, ensure that we could be sustainable in the long-term, as we were able to develop framework budgets to 2025. We can approach the future with confidence.

## WORKING FOR OUR MEMBERS

Why was all this effort important? Because the IPC is an athlete-centred, membership focussed organisation, both of whom were uppermost in our decisions for 2020. When



“I could not be prouder of our staff whose diligence ensured that a challenging year became a triumph.”

Mike Peters IPC CEO

the postponement was announced, we cut the IPC's operational budget by 20% while ensuring no cuts would be made to the monies for member and athlete programmes.

Also, as 2020 progressed and we witnessed the challenges facing our members grow, we doubled our efforts and developed the COVID-19 Relief Grant Fund. In doing so, we made EUR 1.8 million in grant funding available to our 200-plus member organisations for use in 2021.

Indeed, the many tests we faced due to the pandemic forced us to focus on the most important elements of IPC business. We further undertook a deep dive on the IPC's Strategic Plan 2019-2022. We zeroed in on what we had delivered, what we still owed and what we could do better. Our guiding principle for doing so has been accountability to our members.

We have achieved greater communication flow with members, whether by ensuring member engagement via introducing video calls after each Governing Board meeting, or by introducing a bi-weekly newsletter that highlighted areas of best practice among members for confronting the pandemic and provided updates on athlete classification and competition opportunities amidst ever-changing COVID restrictions worldwide.

From our end, we were appreciative of members' understanding and support. At times, as we were re-planning the Games, we did not have all the answers to their important questions, but we knew we had each other's trust and that we were all in this together. Together, we helped each other get to the Games in 2021.

## IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

In 2020, despite what was coming at us, the IPC never compromised on our goal of improving. We knew that we still had the responsibility to deliver the things we needed to deliver, like the Classification Code Review and the Governance Review. With thanks also to our members, Governing Board and committee members, important progress was made in both, which undoubtedly will put the entire Movement on a stronger footing.



Brazilian Para canoe athlete Luis Carlos Cardoso epitomises the commitment and positive attitude of athletes preparing for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

In 2020 we turbo-charged our efforts to collaborate with global thought-leaders in disability. One action we took was to sign cooperation agreements with the International Disability Alliance, the Valuable 500 and UN Human Rights. By doing so, we have continued to build our third pillar of the business.

One of the first outcomes of these efforts has been the development of the decade long WeThe15 campaign. This campaign aspires to be the most effective global human rights movement to represent the world's 1.2 billion persons with disabilities and together with a broad range of international entities, the IPC is going to make a difference for the planet's largest marginalised group.

## THE POWER OF OUR PEOPLE

One constant of the IPC is that our people rise to the challenge. To be clear, we are an international organisation working in the area of

disability, an area which lags far behind other social movements in terms of broad support, institutional backing and social investment.

One consequence is that we need to punch far above our weight and work tirelessly to find innovative solutions for our organisation and its members. It often is not easy work, but our team members are united in our passion to excel, both in partnership with our Governing Board and on behalf of all our members and the athletes they serve.

It is important to share that only one-third of our staff are German nationals. This means that during the pandemic, we not only were trying to deliver on the far-reaching potential of our Mission and Vision, but we also were working to support our many team members who were living separated from friends and family at a time full of uncertainty and very regrettably, loss.

In my view, the Movement is fortunate to have such an incredibly committed set of individuals who are in love with Para sport and with our members and stakeholders who support it. They know full well that the athlete life cycle is fragile and that we need to constantly give our best so that Para athletes can have the opportunities they deserve to put their amazing talents on display and realise their dreams.

Despite the many obstacles the pandemic has presented, this fabulous group of people have epitomised ikigai. They are leaning into the opportunities and challenges in front of them with an uncompromising zeal in their purpose. I want to thank each of them because I know just how hard the year has been.

The future of the Movement is in safe hands, and it continues to be my greatest honour to serve this exceptional organisation and the Paralympic Movement.



# “UNITING THE WORLD OF PARALYMPIC SPORTS AND THE DISABILITY MOVEMENT WAS LONG OVERDUE”



Ana Lucia Arellano is President of the International Disability Alliance (IDA). In 2020, the IDA and the IPC signed a historic Cooperation Agreement to advance the rights of persons with disabilities and jointly commit to use Para sport as a vehicle to drive forward the human rights agenda. As Ana explains here, over the next decade we will be one movement, one people, with one objective – fighting for the rights of persons with disabilities.

The year 2020 was deeply challenging for people around the world and for the international community as a whole.

In the first quarter of 2020, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic started to impact the entire planet in unprecedented ways. It was an even more difficult year for persons with disabilities, who have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and response measures.

The year was, however, not without positive developments – 2020 was also the year in which the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding and committed to build a strong partnership.

Uniting the world of Paralympic sports and the disability movement was long overdue, as we are one movement, one people and we have one objective: to fight for the rights of persons with disabilities across the globe. To discuss collaboration, a high-level event was organised virtually between the Board of the IPC and the Executive Committee of IDA.

This collaboration is very timely given the current challenges faced by persons with disabilities, which we know will continue in the

years to come. The IDA and the IPC will work together to advocate for the full realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities, and we hope that collaborating in a range of joint activities and projects will make a meaningful contribution to the lives of persons with disabilities.

Future collaboration events are already planned. The IDA is honoured to participate in the 2021 IPC Inclusion Summit. We look forward to the IPC participation at the Global Disability Summit in February 2022, to mobilise efforts for disability inclusive development, leaving no-one behind, and building back better after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now more than ever we need a reinvigorated global movement publicly campaigning for disability visibility, accessibility and inclusion. Through WeThe15, which launches in 2021, over 20 partner organisations are starting a 10-year journey with resolute commitment, high expectations and immense transformative potential. The initial preparation and conversations for the campaign started in 2020.

We know this is a marathon and not a sprint. Over the next decade, the IDA, with over 1,100 organisations of persons with disabilities from over 180 countries, will join forces with

the IPC and work with WeThe15 campaign members to realise our vision of a society which values diversity, respects equality and fulfills the full potential of persons with disabilities.

We know that more must be done to break down societal and systemic barriers that are preventing persons with disabilities from fulfilling their potential and being active members of society. Furthermore, the past year has shown that we must also work hard to prevent new barriers from being created. At the same time, we can be hopeful about the creation of more disability-inclusive and just societies. The disability rights movement continues to strengthen and together we can be much more than the sum of our parts.

Harnessing Paralympic sport's unique ability to engage massive global audiences and create positive change is a critical part of the disability movement. This has already helped make good progress in ensuring greater awareness, visibility, and representation of persons with disabilities. The work the IDA and the IPC will undertake together in the coming years will help ensure the rights of persons with disabilities across the globe are fully respected, protected and fulfilled, making inclusive equality a reality for all.



(Top) Masayuki Higuchi (L) and Ryota Yoshida compete in the Men's 1500m T54 final during a Para athletics test event at the National Stadium in Tokyo, Japan.  
(Bottom) Brazilian Para swimmer Jessica Oliveira, a 16-year-old from Rio de Janeiro, whose dream is to represent Brazil in a Paralympic Games.



# WHO WE ARE

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is the global governing body of the Paralympic Movement. An international non-profit organisation based in Bonn, Germany, we celebrated our 30th birthday on 22 September 2019.

We used this landmark date to announce a new global positioning of the Paralympic brand so that the widest possible audience has more opportunities to engage, understand and appreciate what makes our transformational work unique. This is what we have committed to.



Afghan refugee Abbas Karimi is one of the prospective athletes for the Refugee Paralympic Team that the IPC will support at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

## OUR VISION

### TO MAKE FOR AN INCLUSIVE WORLD THROUGH PARA SPORT.

Since the first Paralympic Games in Rome, Italy, in 1960 the Paralympics have grown exponentially in size and scale. The transformational impact of the event has also matured, acting as a catalyst to change for people, cities, governments and countries. Today, the Games are the world's number one sport event for driving social inclusion.

Away from the Games, Para sport empowers people, changes attitudes towards disability and creates greater opportunities for the world's one billion persons with disabilities.

We use Para sport as a vehicle to drive social inclusion at all levels.

## OUR MISSION

### TO LEAD THE PARALYMPIC MOVEMENT, OVERSEE THE DELIVERY OF THE PARALYMPIC GAMES, AND SUPPORT MEMBERS TO ENABLE PARA ATHLETES TO ACHIEVE SPORTING EXCELLENCE.

As an athlete-centred, membership focussed organisation, the IPC sets the strategic direction for the whole Paralympic Movement through the publication of four-yearly Strategic Plans. In addition to overseeing the delivery of our pinnacle event – the Paralympic Games – we also aim to provide support, guidance and the relevant tools to our 200-plus members to develop Para sport at all levels, from the grassroots through to high performance.

## OUR BRAND NARRATIVE

### CHANGE STARTS WITH SPORT.

This was created to better communicate the transformational impact the Paralympic Movement has on society and to drive the human rights agenda. Through our brand, we aim to change attitudes and create more opportunities for persons with disabilities, as well as improve mobility and accessibility.

## OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

### FIVE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES.

In 2019, after consulting with our members and other key stakeholders, we developed five strategic priorities with bespoke objectives. These reflect the IPC's focus and areas of activity until 2022.

1. Strengthen the effectiveness of the Paralympic Movement at all levels.
2. Enhance the Paralympic Games experience and further its reach as a celebration of human diversity.
3. Drive a cultural shift through Para sport for a truly inclusive society.
4. Ensure the continuous pursuit of excellence in what we do and how we do it.
5. Develop and deliver a new brand statement that globally positions our vision and mission.

This Annual Report is a snapshot of the impact the IPC is having in delivering our vision, mission, brand narrative and strategic priorities, and who we are partnering with to deliver them.

# IPC STRUCTURE

**THE IPC GOVERNING BOARD**, elected by the IPC membership every four years at the IPC General Assembly, is responsible for setting the policies and for ensuring the directions set by the membership at the General Assembly are implemented. Composed of 12 elected members, plus the IPC CEO and Chairperson of the IPC Athletes' Council, it meets at least three times a year and meetings are chaired by the President.

**THE IPC ATHLETES' COUNCIL** is a group of elected athlete representatives who act as the voice of the Para athlete community to the IPC.

**THE IPC MANAGEMENT TEAM** based in Bonn, Germany, undertakes the IPC's day-to-day activities which aim to fulfil the organisation's strategic priorities.



A sign of the times in 2020 and 2021: the IPC Governing Board wearing masks for one of their meetings.

# WHO WE WORK FOR

The IPC's primary responsibilities are to serve and support our 200-plus members, develop Para sport and advocate social inclusion, and ensure the successful delivery and organisation of the Paralympic Games. Our members are:

**182 NATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEES** NPCs are the sole representative of the Paralympic Movement in their territory. They have the exclusive right to enter their athletes in the Paralympic Games and other IPC competitions.



Yui Kamiji of Japan and Jordanne Whitley of Great Britain celebrate with their championship trophies after winning the Wheelchair Women's Doubles final match at the US Open.

**15 INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS** They have a responsibility for governing sports on the Paralympic programme. There are 11 Olympic and Paralympic Federations: archery, badminton, canoe, cycling, equestrian, rowing, table tennis, taekwondo, triathlon, wheelchair curling and wheelchair tennis. There are four Paralympic Sport Federations: boccia, sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby.

**10 PARA SPORTS** The IPC is currently the Federation for: World Para Alpine Skiing, World Para Athletics, World Para Dance Sport, World Para Ice Hockey, World Para Nordic Skiing (in charge of the Para biathlon and Para cross-country skiing disciplines), World Para Powerlifting, World Shooting Para Sport, World Para Snowboard and World Para Swimming.

**5 REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS** They focus on regional games, member support and regional cooperation. There are four Regional Organisation members: African Paralympic Committee, Asian Paralympic Committee, European Paralympic Committee and Oceania Paralympic Committee. The Americas Paralympic Committee is an IPC Regional Committee currently under IPC governance.

**4 INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS OF SPORT FOR THE DISABLED** They concentrate more on grassroots development of the sport. They are: CPISRA (cerebral palsy), IBSA (vision impairment), IWAS (wheelchair and amputee) and Virtus (intellectual impairment). IWAS is also responsible for wheelchair fencing.

Together we have a unique opportunity to transform the world, empowering the lives of the world's 1.2 billion persons with disabilities. Together we make a more inclusive world through Para sport.





# 1

## STRENGTHENING THE PARALYMPIC MOVEMENT

A stronger Paralympic Movement increases the overall impact we all can have on enabling Para athletes, delivering sport opportunities, and driving social inclusion.

Paralympic athlete Felipe da Sousa Gomes trains on the roof of his mother-in-law's house in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Felipe is a two-time Paralympic champion with three silver medals and one bronze medal. He primarily competes in T11 sprint events. He lost his vision as a result of congenital glaucoma, cataracts and a detached retina. His wife placed guide ropes around the roof to aid his movements during training.



# THE PARA ATHLETES WHO SWAPPED SPORT FOR FIGHTING THE PANDEMIC

Fighting back against COVID-19 in 2020 required a global effort. Four Paralympians discussed their contributions during the most testing of years.



SUSANA RODRÍGUEZ



FABIO TORRES



GEORGE WYNDHAM



BRITTANI COURY



“People used to ask me if I preferred sport or medicine. I never knew what to answer. Now, though, healthcare is the most important thing to all of us.” **Susana Rodríguez** Spanish Para triathlete

**SPANISH PARA TRIATHLETE SUSANA RODRÍGUEZ WAS THE FIRST VISION IMPAIRED WOMAN TO BECOME A MEDICAL DOCTOR IN SPAIN. DURING 2020, SHE JUGGLED HER SPORTING COMMITMENTS WITH A PROFESSIONAL YEAR LIKE NO OTHER.**

“For the last four years, I’ve been working on physical medicine and rehabilitation. But during the COVID-19 pandemic, many medical professionals in Spain left our daily work to join the battle against coronavirus. It was quite a hard year and still is ... but I was pleased that I could help.

“I saw how serious the situation was. Every day we were seeing some very worrying figures.

“I’ve learned a lot from this. There’s nothing more important than health. Life comes first. It comes before everything. People used to ask me if I preferred sport or medicine. I never knew what to answer. Now, though, healthcare is the most important thing to all of us. Every morning I saw people dying. The situation in Spain was devastating and the cooperation of all of us was a must.

“Anyone can be a hero in this pandemic. It’s enough just to behave properly and set an example, by looking after yourself and everyone else.”

**COLOMBIAN PARA POWERLIFTER FABIO TORRES SPENT 10 HOURS A DAY WORKING FOR HIS GESTIÓN, AMOR Y VIDA FOUNDATION, DELIVERING FOOD PARCELS IN BOGOTA TO THOSE WHO NEEDED THEM MOST.**

“We did it so the many people who live off their day-to-day work, selling fruit or other kinds of food in the streets, had something to eat. There are many people with disabilities who are also athletes, and we support them too. We did it without resting.

“We delivered rice, oil, chicken and eggs. We took them directly to people’s homes. We knew many people needed them because they couldn’t go out to work. Many children are barefoot and malnourished.

“The foundation is working and fighting every day. In the future, we want to find and help more people in Colombia. We want to expand across the country.

“We started the foundation before COVID-19, but the pandemic didn’t become an obstacle. We established events, bought toys for children and even managed to get a prosthesis for one girl. Our foundation has done a lot of good things.”

**US PARA SNOWBOARDER BRITTANI COURY WAS AT THE FRONTLINE OF HER COUNTRY’S RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC, WORKING AS A NURSE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH HOSPITAL.**

“I love being a nurse. In times like these, if you have a degree – especially in healthcare – and you don’t put it to use and you don’t go out there and help, I feel like that’s such a huge disservice. I don’t think I could live with myself if I just stayed home.

“But even as a healthy person, the fatigue of COVID was like nothing else. The lack of smell and taste – I have never experienced anything like that. I could eat something and couldn’t tell you what it was. It could have been cardboard.

“We’re still in the thick of it. The after-effects of this virus are like nothing I’ve ever seen.

“This has made me appreciate the things I took for granted. I just had to keep focusing on something positive or what I was going to do next. Setting small goals is not a bad thing. But this is temporary. We’re going to get through it. There’s a light at the end of the tunnel. Just hold on to that.”

**SIERRA LEONEAN PARA TABLE TENNIS PLAYER GEORGE WYNDHAM JOINED THE EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTRE (EOC), WORKING AS A COMMUNITY MOBILISER TO HELP EDUCATE HIS COUNTRYMEN ABOUT THE DANGERS OF COVID-19.**

“They were looking for people to help spread awareness and knowledge about COVID-19. As a Paralympian, I felt I could spread the message stronger.

“I went for the job and automatically they said ‘Yes, this is someone we need.’

“We shouldn’t leave behind persons with a disability in anything the country faces. Coming out and volunteering to help in the fight against coronavirus, I felt very good. The only challenge we faced was mobility. Because we’re on wheelchairs, we’re not able to reach certain communities.

“So I want to thank the EOC and the United Nations Development Programme for providing us with the vehicles to help us move around communities easily and pass on the messages we need to.

“I thank God for keeping me and my family alive, and I still believe that God will keep me and my family safe until this thing is over. I know that one day, this will be over and we will go back to normal, and I am ready.”

“We were looking for people to help spread awareness and knowledge about COVID-19. As a Paralympian, I felt I could spread the message stronger.”

**George Wyndham**  
Sierra Leonean Para table tennis player



# TECH AND INNOVATION HELP PARA SPORT ADVANCE THROUGH A TESTING YEAR

When COVID-19 arrived, Para sports were adaptable and inventive in finding new ways to keep sport at the centre of their activities. Two sports in particular, shooting Para sport and Para powerlifting, used digital technology to stay ahead.

## HOW DENMARK ADAPTED AND IMPROVED SHOOTING PARA SPORT COACHING

Danish shooting Para sport coach Jonas Jacobsson was used to long-distance communication before COVID-19. Living in Sweden, he relied on Messenger to talk to athletes under his guidance. But the arrival of the pandemic meant new ways of remote coaching had to be devised – and fast.

Jacobsson and some of Denmark’s shooting Para sport athletes were particularly vulnerable to coronavirus. In fact, one athlete was unable to leave their home. So when a new live camera system took its tentative first steps, Jacobsson was keen to iterate and improve.

“Our first attempt was to use a couple of static cameras so I could see live footage from the camp,” says Jacobsson. “It wasn’t particularly great – I had to switch between two computers – but it was something we could work on.”

That initial idea soon spiralled into something much more sophisticated. Danish shooting Para sport technical coach Jens Möllenberg devised a system using more cameras and offering far more precision and control.

“From Sweden I can take over the computer in Denmark and control each of the cameras,” says Jacobsson. “The cameras are positioned around the athletes, so as well as seeing them I can also view the targets.”

“Because we have three different videos at the same time, I can see from different angles how the athletes are shooting. I can switch between them and zoom into and away from the targets. I’ve also switched it to my TV, so I have a fantastic big broadcast of what’s taking place.”

Jacobsson adds: “We’re reinventing and improving everything we did.”

In fact, he is now convinced his current way of operating is better than his pre-pandemic system. Jacobsson believes the flexibility of different viewpoints allows him to be more strategic and efficient with his athletes.

Replays of the footage also help the athlete to view their own technical issues and make rapid improvements.

“Analysing video footage isn’t new,” says Jacobsson. “But doing it in the middle of a training session definitely is. The fact that Denmark’s able-bodied shooting federation is interested in replicating our system suggests we’re doing something that works.”

“When things get back to normal we’ll probably continue to have this set up. We’ll find that, out of necessity, we’ve invented a better system for everyone.”



Jonas Jacobsson competing for Sweden in the Paralympics.

# ONLINE COMPETITION FUELS ENGAGEMENT FOR PARA POWERLIFTING

For World Para Powerlifting, COVID-19 led to huge changes in its competition delivery. An initial one-off online event, where athletes could post footage of lifts from their home environments for judgment by certified technical officials, proved an enormous hit.

Now performance and development manager Dillon Richardson believes the virtual competition format could provide a major boost to nations with more limited travel budgets. “It’s given them the opportunity to compete at the same level as other countries,” he says.

A formal protocol, as well as competition rules and regulations, were devised for the online competitions, which started in April 2020 and then rolled on throughout the year as the pandemic continued.

Richardson says: “Each competition presented the opportunity to innovate and test new things. We also wanted to ensure the competition was accessible to athletes around the world. No registration fee was charged, processes like the weigh-in only required a common household scale that goes to one decimal place, and equipment requirements were loosened.”

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The content generated by the powerlifters was used by the World Para Sports communications team to promote the sport in a new way – the final was livestreamed on Facebook and winners were predicted by fans via an online draft game.

As a result, athletes from 25 countries took part – ranging from Paralympic champions like Mexico’s Amalia Perez to development athletes like the Solomon Islands’ Janet Sibale.

Three-time Paralympic champion and World Para Powerlifting athlete liaison Sherif Osman was quick to give the online format his approval. The Egyptian said: “With the

uncertainty of the outbreak, this innovative competition keeps all athletes motivated and training from the safety of their homes and gyms.”

Colombia’s Fabio Torres, the winner of the first online competition, added: “This online format is really good. It looks like a real event and it pushes you to get a great result, helping athletes to remain strong.”

Richardson is convinced World Para Powerlifting is stronger after the experience. He says: “While these times have caused challenges and changes in all our daily lives, it’s also presented the opportunity to innovate, embrace technologies and be creative. Hopefully these trends can continue for the better.”



2020 saw World Para Powerlifting use platforms like Facebook to hold online competitions for athletes.





# CLASSIFICATION PROGRESS FOR ALL

During 2020, the IPC introduced a series of measures to ensure advances in governance and that there could be classification in the pandemic.

“ Everything was different, but you adapt. Fortunately the pandemic didn’t change the classifiers, they remained friendly and understanding.”

**Marcel Jaroslawski,**  
Competition director, Polish Open Para Athletics Championships



## ENSURING A SAFE RETURN TO CLASSIFICATION

When COVID-19 arrived in early 2020, the impact on classification looked set to be huge. Event cancellations, travel restrictions and the postponement of Tokyo 2020 saw only two of a scheduled 12 classification opportunities take place during the 2020 Para athletics season.

But smart thinking, innovation and determination ensured a safe return to effective classification sooner than anyone expected.

Classification is a unique cornerstone of the Paralympic Movement and performs two critical functions: it determines which Para athletes are eligible to compete in a sport; and it

groups athletes into sport classes that aim to ensure the impact of impairment is minimised and sporting excellence determines which athlete or team is ultimately victorious.

By August, classification was taking place once more, albeit in a slimmed-down fashion. One classification panel and a chief classifier (compared to a normal two or three panels) got back in action at the 48th Polish Open Para Athletics Championships. The number of classification days was extended from three to four. And to ensure adequate breaks between assessments to sanitise equipment, allow fresh air circulation and ensure the highest

level of safety, classification was offered to just 18 athletes.

Chief classifier Rudi van den Abbeele said: “Classification remains classification: athlete-centred and respectful towards all parties involved. Apart from the hygiene guidelines, there is no difference.”

To support the safe return to classification, the IPC developed IPC Classification Hygiene and Infection Control Guidelines. The aim of this document is to support classification organisers and their stakeholders (e.g. IFs, NPCs, local organising committees, classifiers) when organising classification activities.

# RAISING THE STANDARDS OF GOVERNANCE FOR ATHLETES

Good governance is central to effective classification. In 2020, the IPC continued its relentless drive to improve standards.

As part of a strategic refresh of the Board of Appeal of Classification (BAC) - the independent body that considers, and where deemed appropriate, conducts hearings regarding classification appeals - there was a recruitment process for new panel members. In June 2020 a 14-member panel was appointed reporting to the independent chair of the BAC, who is Fred Jansen of the Netherlands.

The primary purpose of the Board of Appeal of Classification is to hear athlete classification appeals in various Para sports across the Paralympic Movement. For each specific appeal, three panel members are usually appointed from the pool of panel members to act as a hearing panel. The chair of each hearing panel is responsible for writing a full and reasoned judgment in each case.

Liz Riley, General Counsel of the IPC, explained the reason for the refresh: “This is the first time the IPC has run an open and proactive recruitment campaign for members of the panel and it was designed to ensure we have the best independent and appropriately qualified people. These new members will enable the IPC and the IFs to ensure the BAC has appropriate capacity and expert knowledge.”

The BAC is a service available to all IFs. The BAC currently has jurisdiction over classification appeals in the following sports: Badminton World Federation; World Archery; World Para Alpine Skiing; World Para Athletics; World Para Dance Sport; World Para Ice Hockey; World Para Nordic Skiing; World Para Powerlifting; World Para Snowboard; World Para Swimming; World Shooting Para Sport. BAC members hold a voluntary position on a four-year term. Each of the current panel members has been appointed until May 2024.

The IPC also acted on feedback to introduce Vision Impaired (VI) classification away from competition, consulting International Federations (IFs) in May and National Paralympic Committees (NPCs) in June.

A report was shared with IFs in December 2020 and NPCs in April 2021. The first multi-sport VI out-of-competition classification opportunities were piloted in the first three months of 2021. Consultations will also roll on throughout 2021 as we continue to scope for more out-of-competition classification opportunities.

- VI CLASSIFICATION AWAY FROM COMPETITION WILL:**
- Provide more frequent access to classification for athletes
  - Generate potential cost-sharing opportunities between IFs
  - Increase collaboration on VI classification between IFs

“ We were very impressed by the number of highly qualified candidates, and athletes should be reassured that we have a panel with a wide range of expertise in the fields of legal, medical, scientific and Para sport.”

**Fred Jansen** Independent chair of the Board of Appeal of Classification



THE BOARD OF APPEAL OF CLASSIFICATION
Hassan Abdallah
Fred Jansen (Chair)
Felipe Cárdenas
Dr Tiago Carvalho
Chris Choen
Alan Dickson
Owain Rhys James
Barry Lysaght
Bethan Mitchell
Andrew Moroney
Oghenewaire Jennifer Nikoro
Chiara Perona
Alberto Predieri
Dr David Sharpe
Joe Walsh



Oghenewaire Jennifer Nikoro



# HOW MEDICAL EXPERTISE HELPED DELIVER SAFE AND SECURE PARA SPORT

IPC Medical Committee member Professor Wayne Derman, who is also director of the Institute of Sport and Exercise Medicine at Stellenbosch University, explains how the sport medical community swung into action when the pandemic hit.

The COVID-19 pandemic meant 2020 was not the year the Para sports medical community anticipated. This threat on a global scale was something few of us had experienced. There have, however, been many heartening things to come out of this crisis, and in sport one of them is the way it has solidified a new way of collaboration and working.

Back at the beginning of 2020, none of us were thinking a disease may bring an abrupt halt to physical activity and the sports industry. We had to re-think how science could be applied into the sporting environment.

Science has been key in the following areas: mitigation strategies – tracking and tracing, mask wearing, social distancing, sanitising and washing hands, etc – and evolving different testing protocols with the ability to get a rapid result and respond effectively to that result in good time.

In Para sport, we were also proactive. Five members of the IPC Medical Committee formed a COVID task team, led by the chair of the IPC Medical Committee Dr Jamie Kissick. We were in regular meetings to ensure we were giving athletes, NPCs and Federations the most up-to-date data across the different work streams we were responsible for.

Manos Bogdos, another Committee member, was speaking to the IPC Athletes' Council and bringing to us any concerns the athletes had.

I was representing the IPC on the IOC planning committee. I also represented the IPC Outbreak Prevention Taskforce, formed by World Athletics and which had the medical chairs from five global sports federations.



“Everything we did in 2020 was building up to provide a safe and secure Paralympic Games.”

**Professor Wayne Derman**  
IPC Medical Committee member

In June, they launched an online risk assessment and mitigation tool for endurance event organisers.

In August, we built on that guidance when Judith van der Veen, the IPC's Medical Manager, developed a COVID-19 knowledge hub for a return to sport. This rich web resource detailed everything members needed to know regarding COVID, and included sections on mental health, the impact of COVID

on persons with disabilities, how to clean assistive devices, all the return to sport guidelines from the different IFs, hygiene and control guidelines for classification, and tools for planning sport events.

One of the most important tasks was done by Committee member Nick Webborn, who collated feedback from the NPC medical doctors about what would be happening on the road to Tokyo. We ended up having several meetings with the NPC doctors to assure them we were doing everything to ensure safety was at its peak when we got to Tokyo. There were a lot of anxieties about the unknown elements, so it was important provide a forum for the NPC physicians to voice their concerns and know that they were being heard.

The progress by the end of 2020 was unparalleled in sports medicine. We learned what worked and what did not from different events held around the world. People worked at lightning pace to identify problems and deliver solutions.

It has been a fantastic and highly encouraging collaboration. We have had people from all different backgrounds putting their heads together to come up with something that is in the interest of sport, athletes and the community. Most importantly, everything we did in 2020 was building up to provide a safe and secure Paralympic Games.

# TAKING ANTI-DOPING EDUCATION ONLINE AHEAD OF TOKYO 2020

The lack of competitive Para sport also had a knock-on effect for another IPC department in 2020: Anti-Doping. However, it did not let it stand in the way of how it engaged with athletes – in fact, it got more creative.

With the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), the IPC collaborated to develop and launch a new education course on WADA's Anti-Doping Education and Learning (ADEL) platform.

The new course, entitled 'ADEL for Tokyo 2020 Paralympics', was designed for athletes and coaches aiming to attend the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games to ensure they could be informed in advance about the anti-doping program in place at the Games and how it will cater to the specific needs of Paralympic athletes.

By taking the new course, athletes gain an understanding of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games anti-doping rules, procedures and requirements – including how to check medications and apply for a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE), how to provide whereabouts information, and explanations of the athletes' rights and responsibilities during the testing process.

The course allows athletes, coaches, guides and pilots (for visually impaired athletes) to identify key information, such as important dates they need to be aware of and which organisation has jurisdiction over them during the Games.

“It is important for the Para athlete community to better understand its rights and obligations on anti-doping.”

**James Sclater** Anti-Doping director, IPC



For James Sclater, Anti-Doping director at the IPC, the course ensures athletes and coaches are armed with the right knowledge ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

“Athletes and coaches should be viewing anti-doping as an integral part of their Tokyo 2020 training regime,” he said. “It's vitally

important that athletes take the time to understand the rules. We don't want anyone's Games experience and years of training going to waste because of an unintentional anti-doping violation that could have been avoided. Likewise, for coaching and support personnel, if they use the course to get even the most basic understanding of the anti-doping rules, then they will be in a stronger position to support their athletes in Tokyo.”

The multilingual course was adapted to ensure visually impaired athletes could make their way through the course with their screen readers.



# ATHLETES' COUNCIL IS FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Outgoing IPC Athletes' Council chairperson Chelsey Gotell reflects with pride on the advances of the last five years and addressing the challenges of 2020.

**WHAT PROGRESS HAS THE ATHLETES' COUNCIL MADE SINCE RIO 2016?**

The thing I'm most proud of is creating the first Athletes' Council Strategy. It's a very proactive step for the Council. The strategy's content was developed in conjunction with athletes' reps from around the world, taking feedback on where they felt we should be focusing our attention and building initiatives to support the athlete community.

Because of the strategy, we now have a more proactive approach and stronger accountability both to the athlete community and the IPC. We can see what our objectives are and where our responsibilities lie. It's created a night-and-day difference in how we function. It's formalised the Council's positioning within the Paralympic Movement and the IPC. And it's made us much more effective.



The IPC Athletes' Council chairperson Chelsey Gotell.

**“I'd like every athlete in the world to have a mechanism to have a voice in the Movement.”**  
**Chelsey Gotell**  
Chairperson, Athletes' Council

**HOW DID THE ATHLETES' COUNCIL SUPPORT ATHLETES THROUGH THE CHALLENGES OF 2020?**

Some of the Council's initiatives had to temporarily be put on hold, so we were able to focus much more on providing input into the operational side of things. For example, we provided detailed feedback into the Tokyo classification process and Games-specific athlete related items.

But above all, we were able to stop, listen and understand what our athletes want and need. Uniting them around the world has been a really big thing. The pandemic has shown the resiliency of Paralympic athletes, and the Council has helped promote breaking down of stigma within nations to help ensure people with disabilities get the care they need.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
There has been a 200 per cent increase in the number of athlete councils and representatives since Rio 2016.

**BEYOND THE ATHLETES' COUNCIL STRATEGY, WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?**

We've gone from 30 athlete councils or representatives to more than 90. That's a big jump, but we've got 200 members – so there's still plenty of progress to make.

Implementing the IPC Athletes' Forums has also been a huge step forward. Bringing the community together for three or four days in an educational setting has helped set a strong foundation for athlete representation within our movement. When an athlete rep comes to you to say the forum has been life-changing for them in helping them evolve as a leader, it makes everything worthwhile.

**TEN YEARS FROM NOW, WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE ATHLETES' COUNCIL?**

I'd like to see the Council create a global network of athlete reps from every IPC member. And all those reps would have seats on their boards, giving an effective athlete voice into their organisation. I'd also like to see the Athletes' Council elevated to a level where it is seen as a strong advocate for change and decision making on behalf of the athlete community. I'd like every athlete in the world to have a mechanism to have a voice in the Movement.

# “LET’S CELEBRATE THE ROLE MODELS WHO MAKE AN IMPACT”

2020 was quite the year for Paulina Malinowska-Kowalczyk, who went from IPC Women in Sport Committee award winner in March to being appointed as Secretary General of NPC Poland in October. Here, Paulina explains why she is determined to celebrate the role models of the Paralympic Movement.



The Polish NPC's Guttman 2020 ceremony celebrated Secretary General Paulina Malinowska-Kowalczyk (left) and wheelchair fencer Kinga Drozd (right).

As I am not an athlete, I have never thought about winning any prizes by working with the Paralympic Movement. I simply love the work I do. I have always believed that Paralympic sport has its mark and identity.

The first time I covered Para sport as a journalist was at Athens 2004. Throughout my broadcasting career, I always tried to show disability was only a state of mind. I've had the opportunity to meet many people who were absolutely unbelievable. Their passion and ability to overcome plenty of everyday difficulties made me respect them even more.

When the IPC's Women in Sport Committee got in touch to say that I'd won the Builder category

in their International Women's Day Recognition awards, I was very happy – it meant the beliefs and values I worked to all these years were right.

In March, when I won the award, I said it would motivate me to continue promoting the Paralympic Movement. I didn't think I would end up Secretary General of NPC Poland just over six months later, but I'm thrilled to have this position.

Given that one of the key objectives of the Women in Sport Committee is to encourage more women into leadership positions in Paralympic sport, I'm proof that effort is working. I am also more determined than ever to do more to help women in the Movement.

It's very important to celebrate women as role models, because women are sometimes in the shadows too much. We often don't believe we can do so much, so when you get such an award like this it is a motivation to continue to work hard and do more.

All of us with a disability have been on a long journey. I lost my left arm to bone cancer aged 11 and when it happened I felt ashamed because people stared at me. But I learned to go about my life without my arm and sport played a big role in giving me confidence.

I don't think disability is perceived the way it was when I was a child, but when one in two persons with disability are out of the employment market, it's clear there is still much to do. There are more people with disabilities in public life, but it's incumbent on us to celebrate those who make an impact and in my role at NPC Poland I aim to do exactly that.

**“It's very important to celebrate women as role models, because women are sometimes in the shadows too much.”**

**Paulina Malinowska-Kowalczyk**  
Secretary General, NPC Poland



# MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMMES – THE NEW NAME FOR MEMBER DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

To further boost the development activities provided to its members, in July 2020 the IPC brought back in-house the delivery of development programmes previously undertaken by the Agitos Foundation. It was given the new title of Membership Programmes.

Launched by the IPC at the London 2012 Paralympic Games, the Agitos Foundation has acted as the IPC’s development arm. It has ensured the IPC is the leading global organisation at developing sport activities for people with disabilities as a tool for changing lives and contributing to an inclusive society for all.

Over the last eight years, it has invested millions of euros into Para sport development projects on a global or sub-regional basis and delivered a range of programmes aimed at strengthening the Paralympic Movement at all levels. It has developed Para sport opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Para athletes, coaches, officials and administrators around the world.

Membership Programme initiatives have three key areas of intervention:

- **SPORT DEVELOPMENT**  
Develop the sport capacity of members to identify, retain and develop their athletes and increase representation in the Paralympic Movement.
- **ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
Enhance organisational capacity of members to become strong and transparent drivers of the Paralympic Movement.
- **AWARENESS RAISING**  
Transform society’s perception of people with disabilities through inclusive education programmes and athlete ambassadors.

## THE KEY MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMMES INITIATIVES

Membership Programmes delivers numerous programmes which are either administered and delivered directly by Membership Programmes staff, in conjunction with partners, or enabled via grants to IPC members, so they can build resource and deliver development activity locally. These include:

### GRANT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

An annual pool of funding that IPC member organisations can apply for to deliver projects that develop athletes, raise awareness about the Paralympic Movement, or develop Para sport.

### NPC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The NPC Development Programme powered by Toyota aims to build capacity within NPCs. The programme will run until 2024 and will reach over 140 countries.

### I'MPOSSIBLE

The Paralympic Movement aspires to change perceptions and bring about social inclusion through Para sport experiences, including the accomplishments, stories and experiences of Para athletes. Aimed at young children in schools, I'mPOSSIBLE provides a toolkit of resources for teachers to share Paralympic values and inclusion through Para sport to the next generation.

### PROUD PARALYMPIAN

Athletes are at the heart of everything the IPC does. Proud Paralympian provides education about Paralympic values and

practical support throughout an athlete's career. The aim of the programme is to maximise an athlete's talent and to develop committed ambassadors capable of inspiring young people.

### ROAD TO THE GAMES

These are multi-year programmes that aim to develop additional organisational capacity in countries and sub-regions where a Paralympic Games or major event is due to be held. Programmes normally feature a partnership with the Organising Committee of each Games as part of their legacy commitments.

### EN SUS MARCAS, LISTO S ... INCLUSIÓN

A partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank En sus marcas, listos ... inclusión is designed to strengthen the Para sport infrastructure in Latin America. Since 2017, 26 vulnerable communities in Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru, Argentina, Chile and the Dominican Republic have had the opportunity to participate in adaptive sports.

### PARA SPORT AGAINST STIGMA

Focused on activities in Ghana, Malawi and Zambia, this initiative is tackling discrimination and stigma to increase assistive technology adoption. It has a four-pillar approach of education, athlete development, Paralympic broadcast and cross-cutting research.

## INITIATIVE CASE STUDY – NPC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Since 2017, the IPC has been implementing the National Paralympic Committee Development Programme (NPCDP). Supported by the IPC's worldwide partnership with Toyota, the overall goal of this programme is to increase the knowledge, skills and opportunities for NPCs to develop Para athletes and Para sport. NPC management staff and volunteers, IFs, Para athletes, coaches, technical officials and managers are the main target groups.

Implementation of the NPCDP has been divided into two distinct phases: phase one, covering the period 2017 to 2020, was designed to apply the expected outcomes stated above to support NPCs to compete in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. The programme is structured around four key areas:

### ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Organisational Capacity Programme strengthens NPCs as active and transparent entities that develop Para sport and promote the Paralympic Movement's vision for a more inclusive world. The OCP is delivered through training workshops implemented on a regional basis, followed by mentoring support for a two-year action plan implementation period.

### SPORT TECHNICAL TRAINING

Sport Technical Courses increase the quality and quantity of sport technical personnel

required to produce top quality Para athletes. Courses are delivered by IFs to focus on training and educating individuals from developing countries to serve NPCs and National Federations.

### ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

The Athlete Support Programme ensures classification and competition opportunities for Para athletes and for nations to qualify and prepare athletes for Paralympic Games. This programme hosts training camps and provides competition grants to increase opportunities for Para athletes from green and blue tier NPCs to develop their full potential and compete at the highest level.

Augmenting this is the Equipment Support Programme. Aiming to close the gaps in Para sport participation across the Paralympic Movement in terms of gender, Para sport, impairment and by region, it provides equipment to Para athletes.

### DIRECT FINANCIAL SUPPORT GRANT

Enhancing the capacity of blue tier NPCs in three defined programme areas related to governance and planning, marketing and communications, and athlete development. Supporting blue tier NPCs by receiving direct monetary benefit through a non-competitive annual grant.

“ By bringing the delivery of Para sport development programmes back in-house we aim to increase greater co-operation and efficiencies with other IPC functional units. It helps us provide a better range of joined-up services to the IPC’s 200+ members.”

Mike Peters IPC CEO



Initiatives like I'mPOSSIBLE in Malawi (left) and En sus marcas, listos... inclusión in Colombia (right) are changing perceptions and increasing participation in Para sport.





# 2

## FURTHERING THE REACH OF THE PARALYMPIC GAMES

The Paralympic Games showcase the outstanding capabilities of persons with disabilities, stimulate the creation of truly inclusive societies that have accessible environments, promote safe and fair participation, and inspire physical activity by all.

Sae Tsuji prepares to compete in the Women's 400m T47 final during the Para athletics test event at the National Stadium in Tokyo, Japan. Because of travel restrictions, this was limited to Japanese athletes only.



# TOKYO 2020 - THE MOST IMPORTANT GAMES IN HISTORY

At the beginning of 2020, Tokyo 2020 was the best prepared Games in history. Then the unprecedented pandemic happened, leading to the postponement of the Olympic and Paralympic Games for the first time ever. Yasushi Yamawaki, IPC Governing Board member and Tokyo 2020 Vice President, explains five key elements that got the Games back on track.

### 1) RESILIENCE TO OVERCOME THE SETBACK

When the decision to postpone the Tokyo 2020 Games was made on 24 March 2020, Tokyo 2020 and its stakeholders were shocked to their core. We felt as if we had spent seven years putting together the biggest and most complex jigsaw puzzle ever and, with just a few pieces left to go, we were told to start over again.

But Japan is a resilient nation. We have a long history of overcoming major natural disasters and building back better and stronger, so we were able to make a quick decision to start over again.

One week after the postponement, the new dates of the Tokyo 2020 Games for the summer of 2021 were announced. Having the same scheduled dates at the same venues enabled us to use most of what we had prepared since 2013.

### 2) ADAPTING TO A NEW NORMAL

Reassembling the Games has without doubt been a huge challenge. There were no manuals and precedents for the postponement of the Games' delivery.

Tokyo 2020, the IOC, and IPC have concentrated on reviewing the whole Games process and tried to simplify, streamline, and optimise critical elements of the Games' delivery. While cost savings were made, the IPC worked hard to ensure the most important Paralympic elements - accessibility and mobility across all venues, transportation, and accommodation - remained intact.

Creating and implementing COVID-19 countermeasures also became an unprecedented and difficult task, but a vitally important one. All stakeholders have worked together and made a tremendous effort to deliver a safe and secure Tokyo 2020 Games for both athletes and the Japanese people.

### 3) CROSS-CULTURAL COLLABORATION

I have never known partnership like this. Delivering the Tokyo 2020 Games is a gigantic national and international project, more complex than many other projects Japan has experienced. The key to the successful delivery of the Games has been close collaboration as one team between the Organising Committee, the government, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, the IOC, IPC, and the sponsors.

This collaboration also required cross-cultural interaction, and it took some time at the beginning for the key stakeholders to understand each other's cultures and traditions, ways of working and communicating, differences in decision-making processes, and the Japanese bureaucracy and system.

Eventually, they have been able to understand the differences and strengths in each other, create a concept and vision for the Tokyo 2020 Games, and work together toward the

same objective to deliver the best and most innovative Games ever.

This cross-cultural collaboration has, I believe, been a beneficial exercise as it has enabled Japan to realise the importance of diversity and inclusion for Japan's future society through the Paralympic Games.

### 4) DEDICATION OF THE IPC TEAM

The IPC team's involvement in the Tokyo 2020 Games has had an incredible impact, helping not only to create a successful Games, but also changing the mindset of Japanese stakeholders and Japanese people.

Everyone at the IPC, the Governing Board team led by President Parsons, the executive team, and staff, are always friendly and sincere, tireless and professional in their extra efforts to help Tokyo 2020 stakeholders appreciate what the Paralympics mean to them and make the Paralympic Games a success.

The whole IPC team has surely planted the seeds for creating an inclusive society in Japan.

### 5) COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORM SOCIETY

The Tokyo 2020 Games are becoming the most important Games in the history of both the Paralympic Movement and Japan.

The Japanese Prime Minister has said the success of the Paralympic Games has become integral to the success of the Games as a whole, and the IPC has become an essential partner for the IOC in the successful delivery of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.



Starting over: the countdown clock for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games is reset with new dates for the Games confirmed.

Through eight years' preparation for the delivery, the Paralympic Games will bring tremendous benefits and leave legacies which will create social innovation and transformation to Japanese society.

In particular, I'mPOSSIBLE, the Paralympic education programme Japanese edition, has been distributed to 36,000 primary and secondary schools across Japan and the children who learn from this unique programme will become future leaders in creating an inclusive society.

The one-year postponement of the Games and the measures taken against COVID-19 will make Tokyo 2020 a completely new Games, very different from previous Games, but the most important Games for athletes who have overcome difficulties to show their resilience and positive messages to the world. They will go down in history for the right reasons.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Tokyo 2020 Paralympic podiums were created using donated recycled household plastic waste with Worldwide Olympic and Paralympic Partner Procter & Gamble. In addition, aluminium waste recycled from temporary housing provided in the regions affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake was used to create the Agitos Paralympic symbol embedded in the podiums.



“The hard work, dedication and expertise of the whole IPC team has surely planted the seeds for creating an inclusive society in Japan.”

Yasushi Yamawaki Tokyo 2020 Vice President

New beginnings: the Japanese version of the I'mPOSSIBLE educational toolkit.



# GROWING AND DEVELOPING THE GAMES

One of the IPC’s strategic goals is to “further the global reach, impact, legacy and value of the Games”. Two initiatives developed in 2020 aim to deliver exactly that.

## CREATING THE BLUEPRINT FOR INCLUSION AT FUTURE GAMES

The vision of the IPC is to “make for an inclusive world through Para sport”. Through a process of continuous organisational improvement, the IPC strives to create an inclusive and equitable environment in which all persons and groups are respected, welcomed and supported.

As the owner of one of the biggest sporting events in the world, the IPC recognises its responsibility to create a platform not only for sporting excellence, but to also promote the creation of truly inclusive societies with fully-accessible environments and to embrace the capabilities of persons with disabilities.

The IPC’s strategy goes beyond Games’-related infrastructure and seeks to encourage positive cultural change. This is in line with our aim to “grow the recognition of the Games’ impact among the global disability rights movement and governments.”

The principles, solutions, and practices used to make the host city and all Games-related infrastructure and services accessible will create a culture of inclusion, in a just and equitable manner, which will then influence and change in the long term the way public facilities and services are designed, operated, and delivered.

In October 2020, the IPC published its Accessibility Guide to support the staging of Olympic and Paralympic Games, as well as other events to promote inclusion.

The Guide, which is available on the IPC’s website, is designed to assist Organising Committees (OCOG) and host city authorities in the successful planning and delivery of the Games.

The publication details a combination of supporting information, guidelines, recommendations, construction building codes and previous Games examples to help OCOGs and their partners deliver an inclusive sporting event.

Furthermore, the document has been created with a wider audience in mind to assist similar organisers and hosts across the globe in creating a more accessible and inclusive environment. The Guide features details on a wide range of areas including accommodation, transportation, venue layout, access to information and services, along with best practices for disability and awareness training.

The document was put together following a productive Accessibility Workshop held in Bonn, Germany, home of the IPC. With the support of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, the workshop allowed the IPC to refine and validate Guide content with a wide range of stakeholders.

Representatives from the IOC, future Organising Committees – Tokyo 2020, Paris 2024 and LA28 – industry experts and commercial partners attended and provided feedback that was integrated into the document that is the blueprint for inclusion in future Games.



# MAKING TOKYO 2020 FREE-TO-AIR ON TELEVISION FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Broadcast is key in growing the global audience for the Paralympics, which is why the IPC providing free-to-air television coverage of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games in Sub-Saharan Africa is a ground-breaking move in its efforts to raise awareness of Para sport and its athletes in the region.

This broadcast initiative is a key element of the Para Sport Against Stigma project between the IPC, Loughborough University, and the University of Malawi, Chancellor College; which aims to support social change and overcome stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities in Africa. Para Sport Against Stigma is part of AT2030, a programme funded by UK Aid and led by the Global Disability Innovation Hub.

For the first time across the region, the Opening and Closing Ceremonies will be free-to-air and broadcast live on 24 August and 5 September 2021. There will also be a 52-minute daily Games highlight show of African centred content in English, French and Portuguese.

TV Media Sport (TVMS) is working on behalf of the IPC to secure Sub-Saharan and free-to-air broadcasters in over 30 countries, with an estimated reach of over 200 million people. The IPC will waive the broadcast rights fee for Tokyo 2020 in order to maximise coverage in a region that has traditionally aired only limited coverage of the Games.

The IPC hopes this initiative will be a catalyst for commercial partners becoming involved in broadcasting Paris 2024 to Sub-Saharan Africa.

Vicki Austin, CEO of the Global Disability Innovation Hub, which leads the AT2030 project, said: “As head of Paralympic legacy in London, I saw first-hand what a massive difference London 2012 made to perceptions of disability. It is why we set up GDI Hub. And with more than a billion people in the world needing access to basic assistive technology (AT) – and only 10 per cent currently using AT – our amazing Para athletes can do so much to overcome the stigma and promote a positive association for the first time for many young women and men with disabilities in Sub-Saharan Africa. This project will change lives.”

30

territories in Sub-Saharan Africa with an estimated reach of over 200 million people will have free-to-air access of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

“The media visibility of Para sport is so important in helping change attitudes toward disability and a providing powerful platform for raising awareness around disability rights, access, and inclusion.”

**Dr Emma Pullen** Lecturer in sport management, Loughborough University

A photograph of a group of Paralympic athletes, likely from Namibia, walking in a parade. They are wearing white uniforms with rainbow-colored stripes. Some are holding flags, and one athlete in the foreground is holding a large purple puzzle piece with the word 'NAMÍBIA' on it.



# BUILDING THE REACH, IMPACT AND LEGACY OF BEIJING 2022

Three exciting initiatives kept the momentum surging forward ahead of the next Paralympic Winter Games in China.



“It is the legacy of changing perceptions and changing attitudes, and I’mPOSSIBLE is an important part of that strategy.”

Andrew Parsons IPC President

## INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

Thousands of Chinese schoolchildren are being introduced to Paralympic values ahead of Beijing 2022 thanks to the IPC’s global education programme I’mPOSSIBLE.

A localised version has been created by Beijing 2022 with support from the Ministry of Education and the China Disabled Persons’ Federation.

The programme includes easy-to-use lesson ideas for children aged 6-18, broadening their knowledge and experience of the Paralympic Movement, Para sports, Para athletes and the Paralympic vision.

IPC President Andrew Parsons commented: “I’mPOSSIBLE is an educational programme that aims to bring Paralympic values, the history of Paralympics, and information about persons with a disability through Paralympic sport to kids at school age. This is a fundamental part of the legacy of any Games.

“China is one of the most influential countries in the world, and Beijing 2022 has the ambition to bring more people into ice and snow sports, so why not people with disabilities practising ice and snow sports as well?”

“That is a very important part of the legacy of the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Games. It is the legacy of changing perceptions and changing attitudes, and I’mPOSSIBLE is an important part of that strategy.”

## PARALYMPIC PICTOGRAMS ARE PICTURES OF SUCCESS

Chinese seal engraving was the inspiration behind the six pictograms unveiled for the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games.

The pictograms, which were revealed at a televised countdown party on New Year’s Eve 2020, identify the six sport disciplines from five sports that make up the Beijing 2022 sport programme.

Each of the pictograms uses similar design traits to those associated with knife carvings dating back to the Qin and Han dynasties.

“The release of the sports pictograms marks the progress in our preparations for the Beijing 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in a visually strong fashion,” said Gao Tian, deputy director of the Culture and Ceremonies Department of Beijing 2022.

“It’s another example of presenting time-honoured Chinese art in a modern way and integrating the quintessence of Chinese culture into sports presentation on the Olympic and Paralympic stage.”

The pictograms will be used in signposting, advertising, communications, broadcasting and souvenir design.

Lin Cunzhen, art director of the Culture and Ceremonies Department of Beijing 2022, said: “We designed these pictograms based on two principles – to stay consistent with the Games’ entire visual appearance and to echo the design used at the 2008 Summer Games to highlight Beijing’s unique status as the world’s only city so far to host both Summer and Winter Games.”

## DID YOU KNOW?

The sharp contrast between the red background and white strokes highlights the grace and dynamism of winter sports, and adds a festive vibe to the Games, which will echo the Chinese Lunar New Year in 2022



残奥高山滑雪  
Para Alpine Skiing



残奥冬季两项  
Para Biathlon



残奥越野滑雪  
Para Cross-Country Skiing



残奥单板滑雪  
Para Snowboard



残奥冰球  
Para Ice Hockey



轮椅冰壶  
Wheelchair Curling

## VENUES PASS THE ADAPTED TEST

All sporting events around the world needed to adjust in 2020, even a Games two years away. Testing of sports events is an important part of Games preparations, but in the middle of a pandemic there has been the need to be flexible to change.

An adapted sports testing programme has ensured the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games continued its preparations, overcoming the complexity of ongoing travel restrictions implemented to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

The IPC agreed the programme with the Beijing 2022 Organising Committee, Winter Olympic International Federations (IFs), and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). It replaced a series of international test events originally planned for the first quarter of 2021.

The tailored programme is based on the needs of each individual IF and aims to reduce the complexity of the 2021 season for all involved, including the athletes.

Adapted sports testing is fully aligned with the spirit of Olympic Agenda 2020 and its ‘New Norm.’ It was successfully applied for Tokyo 2020 and its test events.

The IPC liaised with Beijing 2022 and each IF to determine the details of the adapted testing programme.

The IPC is pleased that, despite the challenges created by the pandemic, the venue testing programme will ensure Beijing 2022 is held to the highest possible standards in the safest and most secure environment.



# UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF THE PARALYMPIC GAMES

It's the Paralympic Movement's most important decade yet, and the IPC is fully capitalising on the positive impact of the Games in the host territories in the areas of urban, economical, sport and social development.

## PARIS 2024 GETTING STRONGER AND MORE INCLUSIVE

Preparations continued at pace for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, particularly so in December 2020 when a venue master-plan, an infrastructure inclusivity project, a ground-breaking media rights partnership, and an exciting initiative to add Paralympic sports emojis were all announced.

In December, the IPC Governing Board approved a new, optimised venue master-plan for Paris 2024. The decision followed six months of stakeholder engagement by the Organising Committee and will see Para judo (Champ de Mars Arena), Para taekwondo (Grand Palais) and Para table tennis (South Paris Arena 4) all take place at the same venues as their Olympic equivalent sport.

Para swimming (La Défense Arena), Para powerlifting (La Chapelle Arena) and wheelchair rugby (Champs de Mars Arena) also

have confirmed venues, while boccia's move to South Paris Arena 1 will create a cluster with table tennis.

In the same month, Paris revealed its plans to create 15 accessible pilot districts around Olympic and Paralympic sites - enhancing access to public spaces, hotels, services, shops and sport services. Parisians with disabilities will also benefit from improved mobility and daily transportation across the city.

Both of those announcements were followed less than a month later by news of an ambitious four-year European media rights agreement to unlock the full potential of the Paralympic Games.

The IPC awarded the agreement, which covers 51 European territories, to Infront, a Wanda Sports Group Company. Both Beijing 2022 and Paris 2024 are included in the deal.

To mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December), Paris 2024 launched an initiative to add Paralympic sports to the emoji dictionary. For many years now, emojis have become ever-more conscious of diversity. From a full spectrum of skin and hair colour to people with disabilities, these small emoticons - now an integral part of how we communicate day-to-day - increasingly reflect modern society.

However, there is one fight still to face - the representation of diversity in sport. Paris 2024 strongly believes that sport is an exceptional driver of inclusion, self-acceptance and recognition of difference. Sport is not only for people of any particular physique; some of the world's greatest champions live with disabilities.

“Emojis reflect society and have become a universal language used by millions of people. Just like sport pictograms, Para sport emojis will be a stamp of recognition and inclusion that has a much bigger impact than you might think!”

**Marie-Amélie Le Fur** President of the French Paralympic and Sports Committee



# MILANO CORTINA 2026 BREAKS NEW GROUND

Para alpine skiing, Para ice hockey, Para Nordic skiing, Para snowboard and wheelchair curling have all been approved by the IPC Governing Board for inclusion at the Milano Cortina 2026 Paralympic Winter Games.

Eighteen medal events, including a new mixed doubles wheelchair curling event, have also been provisionally approved. These early decisions are intended to give NPCs and IFs appropriate time to plan and prepare.

Chelsey Gotell, IPC Athletes' Council chairperson, said: "With more than five years to go until the Games, athletes, national and international federations, as well as NPCs, have a target to aim for in terms of developing the talent pool."



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Mixed doubles wheelchair curling will make its debut at Milano Cortina 2026, underlining the importance to the IPC of providing equal opportunities for male and female athletes.

## LOS ANGELES 2028 CREATES A UNIQUE IDENTITY



The LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games emblem was unveiled in September at a launch bringing together sport, art and the entire Los Angeles community.

LA28 chairperson Casey Wasserman said: "Every neighbourhood, every block, every person has their own unique identity and story of LA. The LA28 Games will

showcase our community's collective creativity and celebrate the diversity that makes us strong."

The mark features a strong and bold L, 2 and 8, while an ever-changing A expresses the dynamism of the city and the event.

"LA is a place of infinite possibilities, infinite potential," said LA

Creator Paralympian Scout Bassett, who competes for the United States in T63 long jump and 100m. "If you have the courage and perseverance to work for your dreams, all things are possible. The Paralympic Movement is growing in this country and we can use sport as a vehicle to change a lot of perceptions and lives."

“If you have the courage and perseverance to work for your dreams, all things are possible.” **Scout Bassett**, Para athlete, USA



# “MY PARALYMPIC GAMES DREAM IS POSSIBLE THANKS TO IPC MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMMES”

One of the four key elements of the NPC Development Programme is athlete development. The Athlete Support Programme helps ensure classification and competition opportunities for Para athletes and nations to qualify and prepare athletes for the Paralympic Games.

The IPC Membership Programmes team works with International Federations to host training

camps and provide competition grants that increase opportunities for Para athletes from green and blue tier NPCs to develop their full potential and compete at the highest level.

One of those athletes is Para swimmer Alejandra Aybar. Thanks to IPC support, she has competed in two World Para Swimming Championships and in 2019 became the first

swimmer ever from the Dominican Republic to win a medal at a major championship. She has also fast become an inclusion advocate in her country. Here, she writes a personal essay to the IPC and her dreams of Tokyo 2020.



Alejandra Aybar and her coach Galvez Capriles at the World Para Swimming World Series in Indianapolis, USA.

My name is Alejandra Aybar, and I am from the Dominican Republic, a small island in the Caribbean with 10 million people.

I was born with a genetic condition called osteogenesis imperfecta, also known as brittle bone disease. During my childhood I suffered multiple fractures to my legs and hips, endured extreme pain and had countless surgeries with long recovery periods. I could not understand how God made me this way. I hated the way I looked and thought many times I was ugly. I wanted to hide from everyone.

I started swimming in 2015 after I damaged my right knee and my doctor recommended it. I was 26 and I had never learned to swim. A visit to a pool in the capital Santo Domingo, where I had moved for college, changed my life. It was incredible and I enjoyed the feeling of the water. I asked myself, how have I lived this long without knowing this heaven? I felt alive in the water.

In swimming I found passion and purpose, but I must confess that being an athlete in a small country is challenging and hard. When I started competing in 2017, my NPC did not have the resources to support me in international competitions and I had to raise the money to compete in a country where few people knew about Paralympic athletes.

And then the Agitos Foundation [now IPC Membership Programmes] came along. It supported my participation in two World Para Swimming championships, Mexico City 2017 and London 2019. That helped me to continue training and focus on my performance instead of fundraising money to be able to compete.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Alejandra studied industrial engineering. She was awarded outstanding graduate by the Technology Institute of Santo Domingo, and later got a job as a quality engineer for a medical devices company.

At the Lima 2019 Parapan American Games in Peru I won a silver medal. When I finished the race I did a video that the IPC produced. In it I was crying, because I was extremely happy to be the first person from my country ever to win a medal in swimming. Nobody Olympic or Paralympic had ever won a medal in swimming.

The video had an amazing impact, it made me visible to my country. The Olympic President in our country saw it and said I should have the same privilege that Olympic athletes had.

Because of the IPCs support, today I receive a payment from the Dominican Government, I am fully dedicated to my preparations for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games and my goal is to compete in the final.

Since then, I have also become an activist and started talking about inclusion for persons with disabilities in schools. Para athletes used to live behind the scenes, and I'm trying to change that. I am now the most famous Para athlete in the Dominican Republic - not only for my medal in Lima, but also for my fight against discrimination. I want acceptance and inclusion for people with disabilities in society and sport.

I know it's having an impact, because recently I had a doctor contact me when a patient gave birth to a girl with osteogenesis imperfecta. She wanted me to give hope to the family through my life example.

I want to say thank you to the IPC, because it's a dream to be able to compete in a Paralympic Games and the work you are doing makes that dream possible. I want to thank you for trying to make these Games the greatest in history.

Para swimming has helped me to love myself. I now love every part of my body and wearing swimsuits. I feel beautiful. I also have friends who love me just as I am.

And I dream big now. I say let's live beyond our limits and allow ourselves to dream and achieve our dreams. Obstacles and challenges will always be there, but as my coach says before each race, 'smile and enjoy it', because the result depends on how we face things that we cannot control.

“IPC Membership Programmes have changed the lives of many athletes around the world. Their support has given us hope and space to thrive.”

Alejandra Aybar Para swimmer, Dominican Republic





# 3

## USING PARA SPORT TO CREATE A TRULY INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

The Paralympic Movement must use its global position and influence, together with its events and activities, to challenge the stigma attached to disability, empower social transformation, and make for a more inclusive society for all.

Burundian refugee Parfait Hakizimana trains at the Amahoro Stadium in Rwanda's capital, Kigali. He is a prospective member of the Refugee Paralympic Team and hopes to become the first Para athlete to go directly from a refugee camp to compete at the Games. Parfait teaches taekwondo to young people in the Mahama Refugee Camp in Rwanda.



# HEAR OUR VOICE!

In 2020, three remarkable Para athletes challenged the stigma attached to disability.

**BIRGIT SKARSTEIN - PROVING SPORT IS FOR EVERYONE**

Nordic skiing and Para rowing athlete Birgit Skarstein became the first wheelchair dancer on Norway's 'Dancing with the Stars' TV show. The Nordic skiing and Para rowing athlete wanted to prove the trolls wrong.

"No matter how much we did, how many boundaries we broke or how many crazy, impossible things we managed to nail, there were always some people not believing in us and saying I shouldn't be there.

"Sometimes, it felt like it was us against the world. It brought us into a mission that was bigger than us - the mission of communicating that dance is for everyone and we are a part of this world just as much as you are.

"It's all about seeing it as something more than steps. Dancing is so much more. If you're used to only seeing dance as steps in your legs, you need to reprogramme your brain.

"When we did our first perfect dance and got the perfect total score, some people went totally crazy and we got so much hate. I had so many nasty messages. Social media went on fire discussing how the judges could be so

corrupt, how the TV show could be so rigged, how we could have so many sympathy votes, how I was cheating, how we should not be there.

“We proved that what matters is not the disability, it is the ability, the person and the work we do.”

**Birgit Skarstein,**  
Para rowing, Norway

"That really disappointed me, because it proved to me that for some people I will never be good enough - not because of how I perform, but because of who I am. (But) ... every week that passed, more and more people stepped up and supported us. We proved that what matters is not the disability, it is the ability, the person and the work we do."



Birgit Skarstein and dance partner Philip Raabe took Norway by storm with daring moves on TV show Skal Vi Danse.



Claire Cashmore (right) and fellow British athlete Amy Marren (left) were some of the athletes with an upper limb impairment who spoke up about 'The Witches'.

**CLAIRE CASHMORE - CHALLENGING HOLLYWOOD'S MISCONCEPTIONS**

When a major children's movie misrepresented people with limb differences, British triathlete Claire Cashmore fought back.

"In the book The Witches, Roald Dahl described the witch's hands as 'cat-like claws'. But in the film, it got changed to ectrodactyly, a limb difference disability. Taking something that wasn't real, and making a decision to change it to a real-life disability, was what sparked me to get involved in the #NotAWitch campaign.

"Children will see the film and associate somebody with ectrodactyly with being a sinister, evil witch. The more I spoke to people, the more I realised they were upset about it. Who did Warner Brothers, the makers of the film, talk to about this? Are there people in the decision-making process that have a disability? That's where we need more representation: behind the scenes among people who are making decisions.

"I'm hardened to these things. I grew up getting called names and now my skin is pretty thick. But there are children out there with disabilities, or teens going through really self-conscious years, and they need to see different representations of their differences.

“There are children out there with disabilities ... and they need to see different representations of their differences.”

**Claire Cashmore**  
Para triathlon, Great Britain

"We don't have balance at the moment. There are goodies and baddies on screen, but it's the baddies that have the disabilities. It's strengthening those age-old misconceptions, rather than making it normal. I want there to be more representation in the media and to normalise it as much as possible, so that when you do have a baddie with a limb difference it won't have such a negative impact.

"People have started to speak out a lot more about things like this and are not scared to use their voice."

**MANASI JOSHI - SPREADING THE LANGUAGE OF INCLUSION**

Indian Para badminton player Manasi Joshi became the first Para athlete recognised as a Next Generation Leader by TIME magazine.

"I want to use the voice I'm getting through sport to change the narratives and perspectives of people. I want to be a participant in policy making and policy change and do whatever is required.

"I feel more confident, more powerful and that my opinion matters. After participating in tournaments, it gives you a very different kind of perspective about sport, inclusion and diversity. When you meet new people, when you interact with new people, that's when I realised I have a voice and it needs to be heard. I should be speaking more and raising more awareness.

"I want to spread the language of inclusion. Whenever communication is happening, I want inclusion happening too.

"As a Para athlete, challenges are there. But as a woman with a disability, the challenges are endless - both personal and societal. We have a long way to go in accepting disabled people into the mainstream.

“Representation matters. Many young girls who look like me must be thinking ‘yes, I can do this!’”

**Manasi Joshi**  
Para badminton, India

I get targeted by so many stereotypical comments and attitudes almost every day.

"Representation matters. Many young girls who look like me must be thinking 'yes, I can do this'. That's because inspirations help us transform the way we perceive our own capabilities.

"My greatest inspiration has been my father, who's a retired nuclear scientist. I've never seen him idle. Even now, at 65, he's enrolled onto a university programme. He's never stopped working. I hope I can keep inspiring the upcoming generation with my achievements. I'll keep on playing sport and speaking up about the importance of inclusion and diversity on various forums."



Double delight for Manasi Joshi in 2020 as she made the cover of TIME and had a Barbie doll modelled in her likeness.



# BREAKING DOWN STIGMA THROUGH PARA SPORT

Partnership is central to Para Sport Against Stigma, a new project that aims to overcome discrimination against persons with disabilities in Africa.

One of the IPC's strategic goals is to forge partnerships with governments, volunteer networks, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and research establishments with shared interests, to extend the impact of the Paralympic Movement's work beyond sporting events. One such initiative was launched in November 2020 - Para Sport Against Stigma.

A GBP1.89 million (EUR 2.1 million) collaborative project between the IPC, Loughborough University, and the University of Malawi, Chancellor College is aiming to overcome stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities in Africa. It is part of AT2030, a programme funded by UK Aid and led by the Global Disability Innovation Hub.

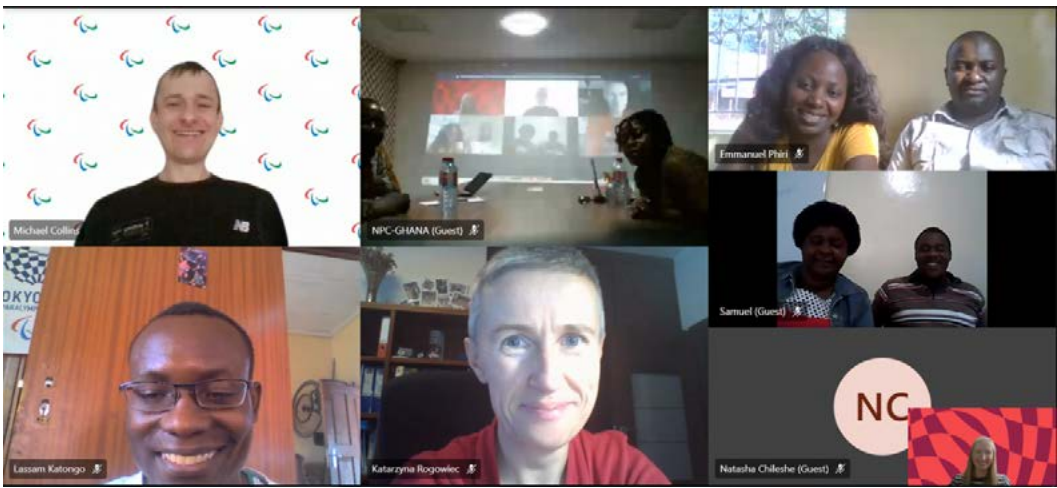
Para Sport Against Stigma will investigate the use of Para sport as a catalyst for changing attitudes about disability and assistive technology (AT) in Ghana, Malawi, and Zambia. The IPC is working with the NPCs of Ghana, Malawi, and Zambia to deliver education programmes, athlete development and increase opportunities for Para sport to be broadcast in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The project hit the ground running at launch with an I'mPOSSIBLE Educator Course. I'mPOSSIBLE is the IPC's global education programme and includes a toolkit of resources for teachers to engage future generations in Para sports, and the history and values of the Paralympic Movement.

The week-long online course saw participants from Ghana, Malawi and Zambia become certified I'mPOSSIBLE Educators and allow them to deliver I'mPOSSIBLE training to teachers.

One of those who became certified was Samuel Nkhoma. Involved in a motorcycle accident in Malawi more than 10 years ago, Nkhoma has since adapted to going about in his wheelchair. He imagines, however, that the challenges he had to overcome as an adult are equally testing for youngsters with a disability.

Nkhoma wants to change that, starting in schools. "When it comes to talking about education, it's very difficult for kids with disabilities to go to school and get an education. And then the education itself - the



**“I really do believe initiatives like Para Sport Against Stigma can make a huge difference and will have a positive effect two, three, four, five years from now.”**  
**Samuel Nkhoma**  
I'mPOSSIBLE Educator, Malawi

facilities, the expertise of the teachers is just not up to speed,” he said.

Nkhoma is seeing attitudes change and believes initiatives like Para Sport Against Stigma will play an important role.

“Having something that is structured, something that is deliberate, to have the teachers on board and have them excited about this is important. I'm looking forward to that because I really do believe initiatives like Para Sport Against Stigma can make a huge difference and will have a positive effect two, three, four, five years from now.”

Six participants from Ghana, Malawi and Zambia took part in the I'mPOSSIBLE Educator Course.

# “WE’RE CREATING THE WORLD’S MOST COURAGEOUS SPORTS TEAM”

In October, the IPC announced its intention to create and support a Refugee Paralympic Team at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. The team of up to six athletes will head to Japan with Ileana Rodriguez, a former refugee and a London 2012 Paralympian, as the team's Chef de Mission. She explains the team is all about empowering social transformation.



Former refugee Ileana Rodriguez competed for the USA at the London 2012 Paralympic Games. Now she is the Chef de Mission for the Refugee Paralympic Team at Tokyo 2020.

It is a huge honour to be appointed by the IPC for this role. As a former refugee who was lucky enough to compete in the Paralympics, I appreciate the value of having a Refugee Paralympic Team (RPT) - it represents sports beyond nationalities and our athletes who will compete in Tokyo will be a symbol of hope for other refugees around the world.

The creation of the RPT is tied in with pledges of commitment the IPC signed at the UNHCR Global Refugee Forum in December 2019. Then, the IPC promised to promote access to sporting facilities, organised sports, and equal participation in sporting events for refugees.

There are many reasons why this is important to us, but there is one interesting one - there

would likely be no Paralympic Games if it were not for a refugee.

The father of the Paralympic Movement is Sir Ludwig Guttman, who was a refugee himself. Guttman, a Jewish doctor, fled Nazi Germany for Britain before the start of the Second World War. It is fitting that the IPC supports refugee athletes, to honour their founder and his own history.

Our job ahead of the Games has been to find the athletes and support them on their journey. There has been financial support for equipment, training, coaching, and additional needs, such as physiotherapy. The IPC has supported all potential athletes to qualification and classification opportunities.

We are grateful for the financial backing of commercial partners such as Airbnb and Panasonic. Worldwide Paralympic Partner Airbnb became the lead partner for the RPT and has supported several athletes to host Airbnb's Online Experiences. These allow athletes to share their stories with the world while earning a small honorarium.

Before Tokyo, my biggest role is to communicate with the athletes and keep them engaged in the process. We want them to feel like they're a team and that they belong to a team, which is so important for an athlete. 2020 has been especially challenging for refugee athletes, but they are no stranger to toughness in their lives. They show the very best of human spirit and I believe we are creating the world's most courageous sports team.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

There are more than 82 million displaced people around the world who have been forced to flee war, persecution, and human rights abuses - 12 million of them live with a disability.



# THE VALUE OF COLLABORATION WITH DISABILITY THOUGHT-LEADERS

Two ground-breaking cooperation agreements were confirmed in 2020, giving the IPC valued partnerships with the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and The Valuable 500 as all three groups continue their work to transform the lives of persons with disabilities.

We asked senior leaders from both the IDA and The Valuable 500 to explain why collaboration with the IPC is so important in the ongoing battle for inclusivity.

## MEET THE PANEL



**Vladimir Cuk**  
is executive director of the  
International Disability Alliance.



### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO PARTNER WITH THE IPC?

**VLADIMIR:** This is a very important partnership. I'm personally excited about it. On one level, we are being introduced to a great group of people. That quality will challenge us to be better, do more, think creatively and think differently from the beginning. And on another level, we can bring the voices of people with disabilities beyond athletes. This gives the bigger picture when you want to make a change in the world. The IPC is giving us exposure to this bigger scene, through its connections and global exposure. It is giving us a platform to channel our messages to the world. This is extremely valuable.

**CAROLINE:** Because there's a mutual win. We're now entering the era of collaboration and the power of collectively working together. When we work with each other, we have more chance scaling and accelerating change than when we work separately. That's the most important thing, because our intentions are the same: to fundamentally transform disability inclusion. The IPC does it through sport. We do it through business. Then there is the business of sport and the sport of business. That's why we're so well aligned. Many of the IPC's backers and sponsors are businesses. Many of our companies look for sponsorship and brand opportunities. It's a symbiotic relationship that can only gain from each other.



**Caroline Casey**  
is the founder of  
The Valuable 500



### WHAT DOES YOUR ORGANISATION DO?

**VLADIMIR:** The IDA is the organisation of persons with disabilities. We have eight global and six regional organisations, through which we bring together the voices of 1,110 national organisations from 182 countries. We work to bring this collective voice of one billion people with disabilities to different stakeholders – primarily in New York and Geneva. We speak with UN member states, governments and international development stakeholders including donors and foundations.

We also work on the capacity building of organisations of persons with disabilities, primarily from the global south. We invest in the capacities of organisations and people to advocate for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities and Sustainable Development Goals. We hold governments accountable through the process of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Committee. We work with humanitarian actors as well, to make sure action coming from various stakeholders is inclusive. And we work with the UN Security Council, too.

**CAROLINE:** The Valuable 500 is the biggest business movement for disability inclusion in the world. It is a global CEO collective working together to drive system change across six areas in business, so we can equally include people with disabilities and their families. We're transforming disability inclusion through the power of business, leadership and opportunity.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR DISABILITY ORGANISATIONS TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP?

**VLADIMIR:** This is one of the most important questions we can ask in the last 20 years. It speaks to several points. Firstly, I think the message is still weak because discrimination is too strong. Discrimination towards people with disabilities is overwhelming. There is a need to connect to make the message stronger in the mainstream. Secondly, the nature of our work is about inclusivity and celebrating diversity. If that's the case, we can't do that without ourselves establishing partnerships. Finally, the funding that's available for disability work is very scarce. Establishing partnerships is a way to challenge this and explain to donors and foundations how things can be done.



“The IPC is giving us exposure to this bigger scene, through its connections and global exposure. It is giving us a platform to channel our messages to the world.”

**Vladimir Cuk,**  
Executive director  
International Disability Alliance



Egyptian Para powerlifter Rehab Ahmed competes in the women's up to 50kg class at the Abuja 2020 World Para Powerlifting World Cup.

**CAROLINE:** I've always said the idea of The Valuable 500 is to be the Paralympics of business. I wanted to have the scale, enormity, heart and impact of the Paralympics. Traditionally, the disability community has not worked in symphony. There has only been a finite amount of resource and visibility, and organisations feared losing their power by working in collaboration. But in coming together, we get more. The issue of disability has become more transcendent in our society. We're talking more. It's more visible. And, in turn, the sense of fear about losing power is falling away. It's so important that as disability groups we back each other's agendas. Not doing so is divisive and it doesn't serve our community. The lack of collaboration in the past has been a barrier to acceleration.

**IS NOW, MORE THAN EVER, THE RIGHT TIME TO CHAMPION FOR INCLUSION?**

**VLADIMIR:** We have come together now, and that's what's most important. People believe the world will be more attentive to the rights of persons with disabilities because of COVID. I believe people will be more attentive to their personal needs, which will be absolutely in opposition to those that are marginalised. If our message is to build on the COVID experience, we're going to fail miserably. Our message is simply that we are here, and we must include people with disabilities.

**CAROLINE:** It's time for disability to show up in all of humanity's demographics, whether it's the disabled woman, talking about disability and gender, disability and LGBTQ, disability and race, or disability and socio-economic backgrounds. Disability is the one club that will touch nearly all of us at some point in our life. It's in every single part of our lived experience. How has it taken so long for us to see that? Disability is a universal human experience. What's happened now is that the curtain has been drawn back. Inclusion means all for everyone, and everyone for all. If it's not that, then it's nothing at all. It's a delusion to believe we can truly speak to inclusion without discussing disability and the fact there are barriers in our society that do not enable us to reach our potential. We can overcomplicate this, but it is that simple.

“Inclusion means all for everyone, and everyone for all. If it's not that, then it's nothing at all.”

**Caroline Casey, founder,**  
The Valuable 500

# IPC DEEPENS RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

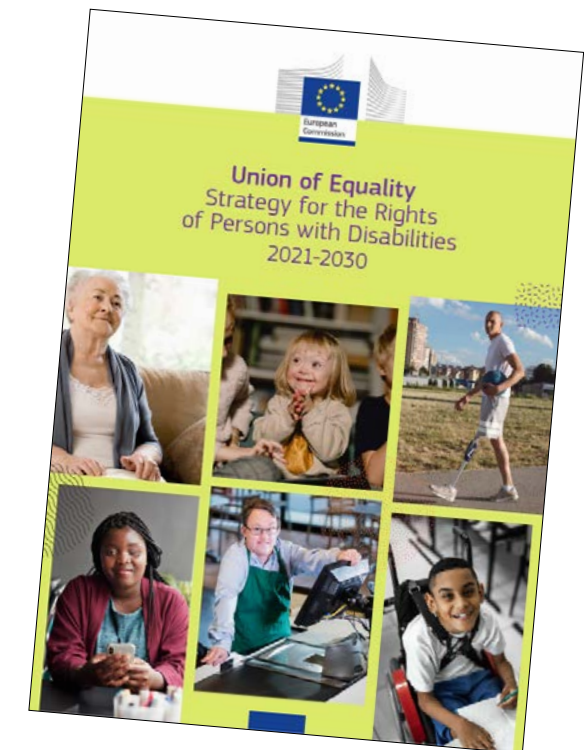
The year 2020 was also used by the IPC to further develop and deepen relations with representatives of the European Union and to advance important issues for the Paralympic Movement.

In February, IPC chief executive officer Dr Mike Peters met with the Head of Cabinet of the European Commissioner responsible for Sport, Ms. Adrienn Király, and the State Secretary for Sport in North Rhine-Westphalia, Ms. Andrea Milz, in Brussels to discuss Para sport in the European context and to present the work of the IPC in the EU. The IPC headquarters is located in Bonn, in the west of Germany, in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. This puts it in the middle of the EU, and as an organisation the IPC also has an interest in being included in thematic debates by political decision-makers.

Although most of the meetings in 2020 were not face-to-face, it was still possible to bring the IPC into contact with European decision-makers through a series of online sports conferences organised by the European

Parliament, European Commission, European Council or civil society. One of the main topics was the EU Work Plan for Sport 2021-2024, adopted in December 2020, which sets out the priorities for the EU's work on sport in the coming years. In this, the IPC has also worked with our host nation Germany, which had been holding the European Council Presidency during the second half of 2020.

IPC Board member Rita van Driel met with the Cabinet of Ms Helena Dalli, European Commissioner for Equality, to discuss the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, which was published in early 2021. In this document, the European Union pledges to partner with the International Paralympic Committee to foster inclusion in sport and combat stereotypes during the next decade. The dialogue that has



been started is to be continued and expanded at all levels in the coming years in order to further promote the topic of Para sport and its social significance in the EU.

The IPC was able to become partner in an EU-funded project under the Horizon2020 research and innovation programme. Through this collaboration, we will host a PhD candidate for three years who seeks to improve the classification of functional vision.

The IPC has likewise actively contributed to the 16th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers for Sport which has inter alia focused on the topic 'Human Rights in Sport'.

In all these discussions, the IPC is committed to ensuring that Para sport and people with disabilities are considered in all political decisions at EU level.



Andrea Milz, (left), Adrienn Király (centre) and Mike Peters (right) met in Brussels to discuss Para sport.





# 4

## A CONTINUOUS PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

The IPC is determined to remain a world-leading sports organisation that delivers on its mission and is committed to excellence in all areas.

Mexican Paralympic swimmer Rubi Cristino trains at her father's auto repair shop in Mexico City, Mexico. Cristino qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, but for much of 2020 was unable to train in a pool due to closures caused by COVID-19.



# CONSULTATION AT THE HEART OF THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The IPC’s Governance Review proposal ‘Remaining Fit for Purpose’ was originally shared with stakeholders at the IPC Conference in Bonn, Germany in October 2019. Following its publication, the IPC’s Governance Review Working Group, led by IPC Vice President Duane Kale, conducted 10 months of extensive stakeholder consultation to gather feedback and update the proposals. Here, Duane explains the progress made in 2020 and what’s next for the Governance Review that aims to ensure the IPC remains a world-leading sports organisation.



(Left) Action from World Para Nordic Skiing World Cup (top) and the World Para Dance Sport Championships (bottom). (Right) Tainafi Lefonno of the New Zealand wheelchair rugby team.



“This Governance Review is a check and test of the IPC foundations to ensure they can support the purpose of the IPC into the future.”

Duane Kale IPC Vice President

## WHAT IS THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW AND WHY IS THE IPC DOING IT?

Governance practices and principles are the foundation for any great organisation, but just like foundations for a building they are below the surface, not overtly visible and should not interfere with what we do. But when foundations get weak or crumble, your structure is in trouble. This Governance Review is a check and test of the IPC foundations to ensure they can support the purpose of the IPC into the future.

The good news is we found the foundations to be in excellent condition and could focus on how we strengthen them. This included a review of our purpose and then building the governance mechanisms to support our purpose, including regulations, policies and transparent processes. The membership had requested that the Board consider several specific areas of IPC governance, so it was a perfect time to conduct a complete review.

## HOW DID THE IPC CONSULT WITH ATHLETES, MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS DURING 2020?

The first quarter of 2020 was spent collecting the feedback from the Original Proposal that was released in October 2019. Feedback was received from the member NPCs, IFs, Athletes’ Council, and other interested parties, such as the IPC sports technical committees and staff. This feedback helped shape the aspects of the proposal that required further consideration

or adjustment, which were considered based on the volume of feedback on a particular item or technical and practical considerations.

A revised proposal was released in October 2020, which outlined or described the changes and rationale for change. Further consultation was again conducted for the opportunity to discuss the changes and receive feedback.

## WHAT CHANGES CAME ABOUT BECAUSE OF THE CONSULTATION?

Based on feedback, we accelerated the IPC World Para Sports’ independence and simplified the internal unit to manage the sport’s transition. The process and composition of the Governing Board was adjusted, as well as General Assembly procedures.

There were some other adjustments that included greater clarification on recognised IFs, member obligations, the role of regional organisations and some more detail on the integrity and disciplinary function.

## DID THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC IMPACT THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW?

As with many things in the world, the Governance Review was also impacted. We had planned on having an Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA), scheduled for December 2020, for members to vote on what would have been the new constitution. We were required to rethink the implications and likelihood of not being able to conduct the EGA and how that impacted the proposal.

As a result of both the feedback and the necessary adjustments due to the inability to hold an EGA, a revised proposal was developed. Although it maintained the core principles of the Governance Review, there were some necessary adjustments required due to the new constitution vote being included with the Board election process. This, however, is not overly concerning and these elements from the original proposal can be reconsidered in the future.

## WHAT IS THE NEXT STAGE FOR THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW - WHAT IS PLANNED FOR 2021?

Following consultation and feedback on the revised proposal, any adjustments will be made and communicated. It is not anticipated that these would include any significant changes. This is based on having completed a first round of consultation where we received a good indication of what was liked and not liked. Following communication of the adjustments, the drafting of the new constitution will then commence along with some of the key regulation documents.

The first draft of the constitution will be made available to members in mid-2021 for comment, prior to a final constitution being written and made available six weeks prior to the December 2021 General Assembly (GA). At this GA, the membership will vote on adopting the new constitution. The implementation of the Revised Proposal would then take place during 2022.



# THE EMPLOYEE GROUP THAT RAISES STAFF AWARENESS ON DISABILITY

The IPC supports various employee resources groups (ERGs) and the Disability ERG was created in 2019 by two staff members. Open to all IPC staff, the Disability ERG meets bi-weekly, works across various departments and in 2020 had 11 members. Bettina Kaus, the IPC’s diversity and inclusion manager, explains more.

**WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE DISABILITY ERG?**

The Disability ERG volunteers part of its time to support fellow employees with a disability. We raise awareness with all IPC staff on how to best engage with people with various disabilities. We have four main objectives:

- Support in implementing the IPC’s mission to “Make for an inclusive world through Para sport” and focus on the staff value of inclusion.
- Support IPC staff with a disability by providing targeted resources and information.
- Raise awareness and support the development of training to all IPC staff on matters related to disability inclusion and awareness.
- Ensure the IPC is providing relevant tools related to matters of disability and inclusion e.g. onboarding, interview process, technology.

**TELL US MORE ABOUT THE RESOURCES THE DISABILITY ERG DEVELOPS.**

To support employees with a disability, the ERG created a document that contains a lot of useful information, especially for international colleagues joining from abroad. It covers important topics like how someone with a disability can get government support (e.g. tax reductions for people with disabilities) through to how you can get your German disability ID card.

There’s plenty of practical advice too, like details on accessible restaurants and bars in Bonn and what to consider when you are planning things like a committee meeting. There’s even information on what to do if a Governing Board member needs to repair his or her wheelchair.

**WHAT DO YOU DO TO RAISE AWARENESS AMONG IPC EMPLOYEES?**

Some employees may feel that because they are working at the IPC, they should know all the dos and don’ts. This can create insecurity on how to act towards colleagues with a disability and Para athletes. To close this gap, the ERG created another document with useful information and gives workshops on disability inclusion.

The document outlines recommendations regarding terminology, interactions with people with a disability, and gives an idea how to address different situations at the office and events. We also developed a disability inclusion session for this. The interactive sessions give staff the opportunity to learn about different types of disabilities and ask any questions. The sessions are well received and appreciated by staff.

**HOW DOES THE GROUP ALSO REPRESENT THE IPC VALUES?**

The Disability ERG aligns with all the IPC’s values, especially these four:

- **INCLUSION - We embrace difference**  
The Disability ERG seeks another perspective. The collective voice of us can be used to understand the impact of decisions.
- **TRUST - We bring out the best in everyone**  
The Disability ERG creates an environment in which colleagues with or without a disability can grow and provides opportunities for colleagues to ask questions and learn about disabilities in general.
- **CARE - We take care of ourselves and each other**  
Colleagues with a disability, especially new ones joining from abroad, feel supported.
- **STRATEGY - We align and prepare for the future**  
The Disability ERG comes from various departments and works together. The work created is useful for everyone and is becoming an integral module of the general staff onboarding process.

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE A DISABILITY ERG?**

Having a Disability ERG allows all of us to contribute to the well-being of employees with a disability in the work environment and it helps the IPC to drive forward inclusion. Inclusion is at the core of the IPC and the disability ERG materialises this value internally. With a diverse group comes diverse views and fruitful discussions.

For the Disability ERG to succeed in its objectives, it is crucial to have the executive office support. Our CEO Mike Peters, himself a Paralympian, has shown great acceptance and encouragement of our work.

## THE DISABILITY ERG IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“It’s nice to know the IPC isn’t only looking out for Para athletes, but also its employees with a disability.”

**Annika Zeyen**  
World Para Sports brand manager  
(Annika is a current world champion in Para cycling)



“The Disability ERG creates a safe place to go to where your questions, concerns and individual needs have already been considered.”

**Daniela Luchina** Membership engagement coordinator Americas

“I don’t have a disability, but I felt it important to become more self-aware and potentially help others who might have questions.”

**Ros Dumlao** IPC content coordinator

“The work of the group makes for more open and comfortable conversations about disability at work.”

**Nael Ogden-Smith** Head of partnership services



“The Disability ERG has immensely helped me when I moved to Bonn, which was just before COVID hit. Across 2020, the group grew stronger even though we couldn’t see each other in person.”

**Matija Grebenic** Brand coordinator



# REVIEW PROCESS ENSURES THE IPC'S STRATEGIC PLAN REMAINS ON TRACK

In 2019 the IPC announced the IPC Strategic Plan 2019-2022, which outlines the focus and priorities of the IPC as the Paralympic Movement's governing body. In 2020 the IPC brought in Vicky Bruce, an experienced change professional, to reflect on how the IPC was delivering on the Strategic Plan and whether any adjustments needed to be made. Here Vicky explains why this review was important and what it entailed.



Germany's Noemi Ristau and her guide Paula Brenzel compete in the B2 giant slalom at the 2020 World Para Alpine Skiing World Cup in Veysonnaz, Switzerland. Ristau has two per cent eyesight and needs a guide to navigate skiing courses. She is in communication with her guide through a digital headset – the guide skis in front of her and gives her visual cues to inform Ristau of what is ahead of her on the course.

## HOW DID YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE STRATEGIC REVIEW COME ABOUT AND WHAT WAS THE THINKING BEHIND IT?

I am on the board of the Agitos Foundation and I met Mike Peters at a board meeting in June 2019. When I left my previous corporate role in early 2020, I contacted him and asked if I could support the Paralympic Movement in any way. He suggested that my expertise could be useful in measuring progress against the current IPC Strategic Plan which was signed off by the IPC Governing Board at the end of 2019. Its creation was a major one-year piece of work and this review would act as a suitable mid cycle checkpoint to make sure the IPC was on track.

Fundamentally, any business - whether you are a commercial business, a sport governing body, or a charity - should have a strategy and be able to demonstrate that it is delivering against that strategy. It's about having a clear, prioritised programme of work and being able to measure and report progress by way of deliverables and key performance indicators.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ORGANISATIONS TO REVIEW THEIR STRATEGY?

An organisation's strategy needs to be 'living and breathing': clearly communicated to ensure a common understanding across the organisation and its stakeholders, with all employees understanding how they contribute to its success. Otherwise, there is a risk that people will focus on other priorities which are not fundamental in achieving the strategy and it will fail.

Our external stakeholders, in particular our members, played a key role in defining the strategy, taking part in interviews, completing surveys and participating in engagement groups. It's important that the IPC is able to share progress with all stakeholders so that they can understand what is being done in areas that are important to them. Furthermore, as we start to plan for the next strategy cycle, it's important that our stakeholders are aware of what has been done so that they can give us a steer on our priorities for the next four-year cycle.

## HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT ORGANISING THE REVIEW?

The first part of the review process aimed to drive transparency across the organisation. We held staff workshops for each strategic priority to make sure everyone had a common understanding of the expected outcomes. We discussed and captured what had already been achieved and then looked ahead to what else needed to be done. These workshops gave staff the chance to better understand what other departments were doing and to highlight where they needed input or support from other departments. For example, an activity in the Membership

team that needed Communications team input or where the Brand team needed Legal support. This helped department heads to better understand the real workloads of their team and to adapt their own plans accordingly.

We adjusted the corporate planning process to separate the day to day ('running') activities that support the running of the organisation (such as finance and operational processes) and the strategic activities. When the plans were completed, senior management reviewed them with the department heads challenging priorities, capacity and costs.

This gave us a clear book of work for 2021 as well as visibility on priorities for 2022.

## WHAT HAVE BEEN THE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS ON IPC DEPARTMENTS OF REVIEWING THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES?

We improved focus on workforce planning. The output enabled us to see how much resource is dedicated to the running activities versus delivering the strategy. This allowed us to challenge whether people are focussed on the right things and/or taking on too much work.

In consolidating all the strategic activities, we created a strategy implementation plan. We have started to give departments quarterly financial and strategic reports and Finance holds meetings with the departments to keep a closer eye on spending trends.

We also defined some key performance indicators and key deliverables which the Chief Executive and Governing Board now use to track progress.

By establishing a more sustainable and professional process this work has the additional benefit of contributing to IPC's strategic priority number 4 'A continuous pursuit of excellence'.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We will make some further improvements to the 2022 corporate planning process. We are comfortable with the status of our strategy implementation and members will hear more about this at the conference in December 2021.

The Governing Board has agreed a plan for developing the 2023-2026 strategy and work will start on this in January 2022. We will get insights and thoughts from the new board and then reach out to many of our stakeholders during the middle of the year.

In the meantime, we will continue to deliver what is required to achieve the current strategic plan.



# WORLD PARA SPORTS: SUMMER MADNESS ON SOCIAL

How the team at the IPC that looks after communications for the World Para Sports used social media to engage new viewers.

In March, when the Para sport season was about to start, everything was put on hold due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

All around the world, athletes, IFs and teams had to search for alternatives to engage with their fanbases and give them the content they were craving. With everyone stuck at home, social media became the most important – and the only – point of contact between fans and their favourite team, sport or athlete.

The big boom of the World Para Sports social media numbers occurred in the summer sports accounts: World Para Athletics, World Para Swimming, World Para Powerlifting (WPPO) and World Shooting Para Sport. Although the cancellation and postponement of events was bad news and brought many headaches, the small World Para Sports content creation team took the opportunity to approach and experiment in a new way.

Usually busy with the coverage of all events, the team was able for the first time to shift the focus to evergreen content. This included funny graphics, profile videos of athletes, explanation videos of sports, engagement with international dates, reviews of past events and some bespoke content with Asics (the creation of a 'Virtual Race') and Ottobock (live chats on Facebook).

The results speak for themselves – in comparison to 2019, a year with World Championships, World Para Athletics in 2020 had 142 per cent more interactions and 304 per cent more video views on Facebook, and 171 per cent more impressions on Twitter.

World Para Swimming channels had many videos going viral and saw 1,378 per cent more interactions and 478 per cent more impressions on Facebook. On the World Para Swimming's Instagram, there were 70 per cent more video views and, on Twitter, 186 per cent more engagement. World Shooting Para Sport had 26 per cent more videos views on Facebook, 119 per cent more impressions and 142 per cent more interactions on Twitter.

The World Para Powerlifting management team came up with an online competition among athletes, where they could challenge each other lifting weight from their homes. The new approach was very beneficial for the overall engagement with fans and athletes, keeping them supplied with their daily/weekly loved Para powerlifting content. In comparison with 2019, the WPPO Facebook account had 263% more interactions and 80% more video views; Twitter saw 84% more impressions and 113% more interactions; and Instagram grew 25%, had 4,6% more video views and 10% more engagement.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In 2020, TikTok became a trend and many athletes managed to create some truly engaging content. World Para Swimming shared a post on its Facebook page that US swimmer Jessica Long made, showing how she puts on her prosthetic legs. It was viewed over 100 million times in 2020 on the WPS account, making it the most viewed post of the year across the WPS and @Paralympic social media channels.



Some of the ways World Para Sports engaged socially with fans in 2020.

# DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY TAKES CENTRE STAGE FOR IT

Patrick Stolpmann, head of technology and transformation at the IPC, explains how his team kept the IPC connected and how digital accessibility is firmly on the agenda of the IPC.

In 2020, the IPC technology and transformation (T&T) team focussed on improving efficiency, service levels and security. Fostering a modern workplace approach with online collaboration and communication helped the organisation adapt to the unprecedented situation of a global pandemic.

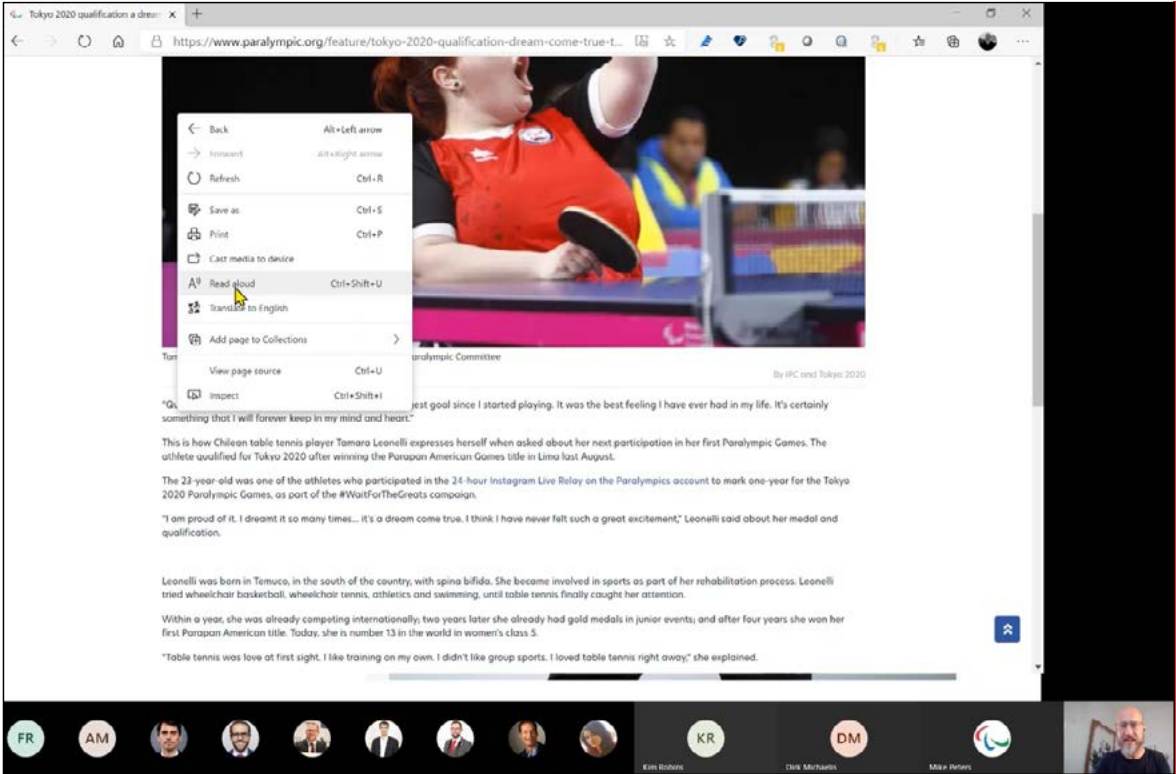
The story of 2020 was quickly and effectively enabling remote work (all with the T&T team working remotely), ensuring robust data security and protection, and providing easy access for all. This gave the T&T new momentum to further continue with the IPC's digital transformation roadmap.

A major milestone achieved was the fundamental change of the IPC's IT landscape, transitioning from a traditional IT infrastructure to a cloud-first approach. This adoption not only allowed the IPC to enable better access and data handling methods, but also to implement an array of security measures, vastly improving the overall security posture of the organisation.

Over the course of 2020, the IPC was also able to completely internalise IT knowledge and operations, decreasing dependency from third parties.

New features coming to the modern workplace applications allowed the IPC to initiate a conversation around the importance of digital accessibility. Our main initiatives were education and awareness through workshops, creating internal knowledge bases and regular information sharing, and the use of accessibility tools and services to make our communication more suitable for our stakeholders.

Best practice guidelines for the organisation were introduced, equipping the IPC with a checklist to turn change into habit, and to begin setting a standard for digital accessibility.



The IPC has been working closely with Microsoft to improve digital accessibility.

“story of 2020 was quickly and effectively enabling remote work, ensuring robust data security, and providing easy access for all.”

**Patrick Stolpmann**  
Head of technology and transformation, IPC





# 5

## DELIVERING CHANGE FOR THE WORLD

It is important that more people are exposed to and engage with the Paralympic Movement, understand its purpose, and recognise its transformational impact in changing the world for the better.

Paralympic archer Matt Stutzman trains during a session in Fairfield, Iowa. Athletes across the globe trained in isolation under strict policies in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Matt was one of the stars of the award-winning Netflix documentary about the Paralympic Movement, *Rising Phoenix*.



# RISING PHOENIX BROADCASTS THE VISION OF THE PARALYMPICS TO THE WORLD

Launched on Netflix in August 2020, *Rising Phoenix* told the extraordinary story of the Paralympic Games like never before.

Coinciding with the one-year-to-go celebrations for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games was a ground-breaking movie: *Rising Phoenix*.

Examining how the Paralympics have sparked a global movement, *Rising Phoenix* shows how the Games continue to change the way the world thinks about disability, excellence, diversity and human potential. Broadcast in over 190 countries on Netflix, it has gone on to win several awards.

The movie features nine Paralympians from across the world: Bebe Vio (Italy), Ellie Cole (Australia), Jean-Baptiste Alaize (France), Matt Stutzman (USA), Jonnie Peacock (Great Britain), Cui Zhe (China), Ryle Batt (Australia), Ntando Mahlangu (South Africa) and Tatyana McFadden (USA). Tatyana was a producer on the film, and here she explains its process.



## DID YOU KNOW?

The title track for the soundtrack of *Rising Phoenix* was performed by three artists who all have a disability: George Dorman and Keith Jones, both of whom have cerebral palsy, and Toni Hickman, who has survived two brain aneurysms and a stroke. George later joined the IPC as an intern within the communications team.

Movement. I told the directors what I went through as a young disabled person, my journey, what I hoped for and where we are globally as a Paralympic Movement.

It was important that the film was an advocate for persons with disabilities. I wanted to make sure we hired people with disabilities on the film. The purpose of this film was athletes talking about equality and how we can push that forward. That same equality was needed in the film making and it was incredible that 16 per cent of the working group who made this film had a disability.

The directors learned many things, like finding accessible buildings and transport. They learned a lot of new words and phrases, and that it is OK to say disability. They learned that we shouldn't have to hunt to find disabled people to work in film production, although we did. I hope it sets a change for Hollywood and it pushes a movement.

Finally, the visual aesthetic was important too. Pictures say a thousand words and we wanted certain imagery to portray certain things because I feel that globally people have a perception of what disabled should look like. We wanted to smash those perceptions and we did - people said that we looked so beautiful and so elegant, and they were genuinely surprised that we are no different to any other person. That was the whole goal of the film."

**Tatyana McFadden**, athlete and producer

# STARS OF RISING PHOENIX EXPLAIN ITS IMPACT

**JONNIE PEACOCK,**  
**BRITISH PARA ATHLETE**

"The stories in *Rising Phoenix* blew me away. I've known Jean-Baptiste Alaize (below) since I started in Para sport. I've shared a room with him, and I've spoken to him about what he's been through. But seeing his story in film, I was in tears. It was at that moment the film taught me something. I've been someone who has always been about the sport in the Paralympics, I don't really want to talk about the story. But when you see that you go 'wow, that's why the Paralympics are important'. It's showing so many people these dark days and that you can turn them around."

**BEBE VIO,**  
**ITALIAN WHEELCHAIR FENCER**

"The cool thing about *Rising Phoenix* is that it shows people who had so much bad luck, but through that they found out how to be a better person, how to live a better life, how to fight in some way and some situation. This film shows so many different people who have achieved so much, and that's why I really loved the film."



“My biggest hope is that people watch *Rising Phoenix* and go, 'No matter how hard my life is, no matter how hard a day or a week can be, this is what I aspire to, not just for me but for my family and all my loved ones.' It is that element that I think will end up changing the world."

**Prince Harry** Duke of Sussex



# #WAITFORTHEGREATS CELEBRATES ATHLETES WITH ONE YEAR TO GO

To mark one year to go until the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics the IPC launched #WaitForTheGreats, a multi-pronged athlete-focussed campaign that aimed to generate excitement and interest ahead of the rearranged Games.

Tokyo 2020 did not take place as planned, but that did not stop the IPC creating a celebration around the exact time the Paralympic Games would have taken place. A brand campaign called #WaitForTheGreats ran from 25 August through to 6 September.

The campaign included a range of engaging athlete-centred content and kicked off with a daring TV advert. Titled #WaitForTheGreats, the first 17 seconds of the 30-second spot, which was created and developed by advertising agency adam&eveDDB, took place in darkness. Viewers were transported into the world of sprinter David Brown at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. It is the final of the 100m T11 for athletes with a vision impairment. The Team USA athlete is wearing a Stars and Stripes blindfold.

Accompanying Brown is his guide Jerome Avery, who sprinted down the track with him. Out of the darkness comes Avery's voice, giving Brown some last-minute advice and encouragement: "Alright it's showtime. You've worked hard to be here David," says Avery, then telling Brown where to place his hands behind the start line before the pistol goes off.

Viewers follow the pair down the track. It is still dark and all that can be heard is Avery's calls of "Drive, drive, drive, pick it up!" before he gives Brown a countdown. "Twenty metres, 40. Come on, you're looking good. Eighty metres, 90," before a final screamed instruction of "Lean!" as they cross the line first and the commentator announces that their time of 10.99 is a new Paralympic record.



David Brown (left) and his guide Jerome Avery celebrate winning gold in the 100m T11 race at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

"Greatness will wait," was the message that started the second half of the advert, as viewers saw more Paralympic athletes celebrate their previous successes. The advert ended with the message, "The Paralympics will return in 2021, #WaitForTheGreats."

Paralympic rights-holding broadcasters engaged with the TV spot: the likes of Channel 4, NBC, CCTV, SuperSport, as well as broadcasters in Austria, Denmark, Finland, Portugal, Israel and Belgium, showed the advert over 2,000 times.

The IPC developed a campaign around athlete-generated content with the hashtag #WaitForTheGreats, and there was a partnership with Twitter to develop an emoji hashtag.

To mark the original date of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Opening Ceremony (25 August), there was a 24-hour Instagram Live Relay. This featured 24 athletes representing 24 countries and 22 sports. Interviews were conducted in English, Japanese, Indonesian, Persian, Ukrainian, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

Each day, Para athletes also took over the IPC's Instagram stories with a Paralympic quiz, asking questions about themselves and their sports. There was also a poll for the greatest Paralympic Moment of the Decade, and a TikTok partnership where Para athletes shared their amazing stories and skills.

## DID YOU KNOW?

There were 145,459,695 impressions for the #WaitForTheGreats hashtag on Twitter for the two-week period of the campaign.

# AIRBNB GET CREATIVE TO BRING PARA ATHLETES TO HOMES ACROSS THE WORLD

When the pandemic hit, Airbnb developed Online Experiences, in which hosts virtually share a one-of-a-kind activity with guests from around the world. Paralympians like Great Britain's Stephen Miller took full advantage.

According to proverb, "necessity is the mother of invention." It means that the primary driving force for most new inventions is a need. When the pandemic shut down travel across the world and national lockdowns limited personal engagement, Worldwide Paralympic Partner Airbnb got creative.

In April 2020, Airbnb launched Online Experiences, a platform that allows guests to connect with new people and travel virtually, all from the comfort of their own living room. It unlocked unprecedented access to inspiring hosts across the world and that included

Paralympic athletes. An added benefit was that it also brought in a new earning opportunity for many athletes stuck at home.

One of the first Para athletes on the Airbnb Online Experiences was Paralympic champion Stephen Miller, who hosted guests on a unique journey through... his mind.

Born with cerebral palsy, Miller shared how he mastered the art of positive thinking to enjoy a successful athletic career that includes three Paralympic gold medals. He felt the topic was especially applicable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I picked this theme because I believe in the power of thinking positively, and I think it can make a big difference in people's lives if they can change the way they think, and how they approach and react to different situations," Miller said.

"No one can control what's happening. But you can control how you react, how you think and how you feel.

"[In my Experience] I want people to take something away that they can use in their own lives. Me just talking about what I love to do is interesting, but it's not going to be something they can (practically apply)."

Miller's personal journey towards six Paralympic Games (1996-2016) started with his parents, who helped him see opportunities instead of obstacles. That allowed him to feel free - not afraid - to try different sports until he discovered club throwing. He even explored a backwards throwing technique that eventually revolutionised the sport.

A key element of many Airbnb Online Experiences is interaction with the online guests. In Stephen's case, the paying public listen to his story before exploring practical applications of positive thinking, including meditation, stretch exercises and real-life examples. One thing is for sure, Miller believes Paralympians make excellent hosts.

"Don't underestimate the value of your story and the lessons you've learned in your journey towards being a Paralympic athlete," Miller said.



Don't underestimate the value of your story and the lessons you've learned in your journey toward being a Paralympic athlete."

**Stephen Miller**  
Paralympian, Great Britain



# PARALYMPIANS' LIFE-LESSONS BECOME AN AWARD-WINNING PODCAST HIT

In August 2020, the IPC launched its first official podcast. *A Winning Mindset: Lessons from the Paralympians* built on our partnership with Allianz to bring together insights and experiences that can benefit everyday life.

Produced in collaboration with Livewire Sport, it became an instant hit. It won a Webby Award in the Best Branded Podcast or Segment category, and Best Podcast at the Digiday Media Europe Awards. Here are some of the stories it told:

Allianz | INTERNATIONAL  
PARALYMPIC  
COMMITTEE  
International Partner

"IF WE DO NOT  
FAIL, WE  
CANNOT  
UNDERSTAND  
THE MEANING  
OF SUCCESS."

GREG POLYCHRONIDIS

Allianz | INTERNATIONAL  
PARALYMPIC  
COMMITTEE  
International Partner

"I WANT PEOPLE  
TO FEEL  
EMPOWERED  
AND BRAVE  
WHEN THEY  
SEE MY  
STORY."

GRACE WEMBOLUA

Allianz | INTERNATIONAL  
PARALYMPIC  
COMMITTEE  
International Partner

"WHY TRY  
SO HARD TO  
FIT IN WHEN  
YOU WERE  
BORN TO  
STAND OUT?"

MEICA HORSBURGH

Allianz | INTERNATIONAL  
PARALYMPIC  
COMMITTEE  
International Partner

"DISABILITY  
SHOULDN'T  
BE SOMETHING  
TO WORRY  
ABOUT. IT'S  
SOMETHING  
TO EMBRACE."

ELLEN KEANE

Allianz | INTERNATIONAL  
PARALYMPIC  
COMMITTEE  
International Partner

"YOU SHOULD  
NEVER HAVE  
FEAR.  
IF YOU HAVE  
FEAR, YOU  
MAKE A  
MISTAKE."

BRUNO BOSNJAK

Allianz | INTERNATIONAL  
PARALYMPIC  
COMMITTEE  
International Partner

"RESILIENCE  
IS LIKE A  
SPONGE.  
YOU CAN  
SQUEEZE IT,  
BUT IT ALWAYS  
COMES BACK."

MARKUS REHM

**GREG POLYCHRONIDIS, GREECE,  
BOCCIA -  
ON OVERCOMING SETBACKS**

"I do the best to live my life the way I want to. Being born with a disability makes you stronger. From childhood, you know you have to struggle. You have a weak point and you have to make some other points much stronger to have a normal life.

"There isn't a person in the world who hasn't had disappointments and failure. The important thing is how to overcome this. Find your mistake in order to become stronger. We must become strong from each failure in life and we must appreciate when we succeed. If we do not fail, we will never know the meaning of success. We are all capable of doing and accomplishing great things."

**ELLEN KEANE, IRELAND,  
SWIMMING -  
ON BEING A ROLE MODEL**

"As Paralympians, we strive for the respect of everyone else seeing us as elite athletes - not just people with disabilities. When I got verified on Instagram, and it was such a high. I felt like I had more power over influencing people's perceptions of disabilities.

"When I was growing up, I became really introverted. I hated the fact people were staring at me. It's an awful feeling. People are looking at what's different about you. I was so unhappy. I felt like I was so unworthy of love.

"My media work is so important for representation, because disability can happen to anyone at any point in their life. The more you see of something, the less of a big deal it is and the less scary it is."

**GRACE WEMBOLUA, FRANCE,  
WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL -  
ON BODY CONFIDENCE**

"Being a teenager was the most complicated period of my life. That's where my journey with accepting my body started. But as long as you are comfortable within yourself, whatever other people feel about you will not matter. By going out, I can show people what a burn survivor is. So, the next time they go out, they won't stare at a kid or teenager. That's mission accomplished.

"I can hide myself for three months, but it won't bring a solution. I'm still going to be Grace with two prosthetics and my burn scars. I can't remember the last time I went out in a long-sleeved shirt when it was warm. To me, that's a massive achievement. The more people see you confident, the more they will treat you normally."

**BRUNO BOSNJAK, CROATIA,  
SNOWBOARD -  
ON OVERCOMING TRAUMA**

"I recognised something was wrong. When I was there, I wanted to move. But I just felt my head. I can't describe this to someone who hasn't experienced it. I was already crying. I wanted to fall asleep, let the doctor do his job and wake up with everything fine. When I woke up, it wasn't fine.

"The worst time was when I left the rehabilitation centre. There I was the star; the guy who can walk again. Out in the world, I was the disabled guy needing help.

"After my second accident, I really started to think 'OK, maybe I have a mission.' It's important for other people to see my story, to motivate them. It makes me think 'OK, I'm going through this for others.' Things can always become at least a little bit better."

**MEICA HORSBURGH, AUSTRALIA,  
GOALBALL -  
ON MENTAL HEALTH**

"In my teenage years, I got teased a lot. I hated life. I hated myself. I didn't know why I was the one that was different. The bullying was daily. It got to the point where there was nothing to live for. Aged 13, I tried to take my own life. I struggled a lot - but I do think sport saved me.

"Goalball, and getting my frustrations out on court, helped me find a place I'd fit in. I knew I wasn't alone. People were going through the same things.

"We all belong. We all have a place in the world. I try to make everyone understand that you should love yourself. My favourite quote is 'why try so hard to fit in when you were born to stand out?' Life is definitely worth living."

**MARKUS REHM, GERMANY,  
ATHLETICS -  
ON BREAKING BARRIERS**

"As a Paralympic family, we prove so many people wrong. I'd like to perform at the Olympic Games, but not because I want to be an Olympic athlete. I'm a proud Paralympian. I want to compete at the Olympic Games to prove that it's worth getting tickets for our events.

"Look at our athletes. There are so many great stories. I get goosebumps when I see a person playing table tennis with the racket in their mouth. It's incredible.

"My next barrier is 8.50m in the long jump. It's a lot of work, but let's see. If someone says your goal is impossible, just start. Don't ask anybody for permission. Once you've found a solution, just do it. Don't overthink it."



# THE PARTNERS CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ON INCLUSIVE ADVERTISING

Representation matters for Toyota and P&G, two of the IPC’s worldwide partners, who brought the values they share with the Paralympics to TV’s biggest stage



Myah Schneider’s reaction to seeing Toyota’s advert with Jessica Long ended with her getting the chance to have a video call with US Paralympic swimmer.

A mother’s Instagram post underlined why representation of persons with disabilities in advertising matters. Little Myah Schneider, who has spina bifida, saw someone like her in a TV commercial.

“That girl has crutches like me,” she said, before grabbing her crutches and adding, “I want to be like that girl.” In the post, her mother Lisa added: “For Myah to see someone ‘like her’ means so much more than people realise and on such a huge platform.”

The ‘huge platform’ was the holy grail of advertising slots, halftime at the Super Bowl, the single largest annual TV event in the United States. The 60-second advert was called ‘Upstream’ and was created by Toyota.

It beautifully and powerfully tells the story of US Paralympic swimmer Jessica Long, from her adoption at a Russian orphanage and having her legs amputated aged 18 months, to her dedication to become a 13-times Paralympic gold medalist.

For Toyota – which developed the advert with Jessica and her parents to ensure it was an accurate portrayal of their story – the spot represents the values it shares with Paralympic and Olympic Movements, which is inspiring people to reach their full potential.

Of the 61 ads placed across the Super Bowl, ‘Upstream’ was one of the most talked about, something that Lisa Materazzo, Group Vice President for Toyota marketing at Toyota Motor North America, welcomed:

“It’s amazing to see the commercial being well received, even when it doesn’t feature a vehicle or mobility product. It shows us the impact that powerful storytelling can have and we’re thankful to Jessica and her parents for allowing us to share such a personal part of their story.”

Materazzo added that Toyota also appreciated hearing from people like Lisa Schneider about the impact ‘Upstream’ had on her family.

“Parents of children with mobility challenges shared with us how special this commercial was for them. We’re aware that people with physical disabilities and physical differences can be a highly marginalised group and, for Toyota, it’s important to give them representation.”

High-profile support of Para athletes is not new for Toyota. It has featured Paralympians in Super Bowl adverts three times in the last six years. For Materazzo, Toyota views Paralympic athletes as people who demonstrate that no matter the challenge, when a person is free to move, anything is possible.

“As a mobility company and a proud supporter of the Olympic and Paralympic Movements, we thought this year’s ad would be a great opportunity to reiterate our belief in an inclusive, barrier-free world where mobility is a human right.”

Being inclusive is exactly what P&G, one of the world’s largest advertisers, also did during the Super Bowl. Its advert for its laundry detergent Tide brand did not feature disability but broke new ground in accessibility.

It developed the first ever Super Bowl ad with audio description. Created for those with low or no vision, an audio-described ad is visually identical to a regular spot. What is different is the track played behind it: the original audio is at a slightly lower level while a narrator describes the action not communicated by sounds and speech.

P&G has been busy developing audio ads for several years, and working alongside the disability experts from the Royal National Institute from the Blind in the UK, the American Council of the Blind, and the National Federation

of the Blind in the US, it has been at the forefront of campaigning for audio-described ads to become an industry standard. It is making it a reality and is hopeful other brands will now follow its lead and quite literally speak to hundreds of millions of people around the world.

And progress is important, because as this second part of the Schneider family story shows, disability representation in advertising matters and is very real. After seeing the Instagram post, Toyota set up a call between Jessica and Myah. For her mum Lisa, it meant so much.

“Myah doesn’t really have anyone close to her that she can relate to in her struggles, so for her to be able to see and feel that she is not alone is so important. This is one of the reasons why representation matters so much. No one should ever feel alone. I cannot come up with words that seem adequate enough to express our sincere gratitude to Jessica Long for paving the path for kids like Myah everywhere and for making my little girl feel so special.”





# “WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THE POWER OF SPORT, THE PARALYMPIC GAMES ARE THE ABSOLUTE PINNACLE OF THAT POWER.”



“I came into London 2012 as a journalist who had avoided addressing his disability and left as a TV presenter who celebrated it.”

**Alex Brooker** Journalist, presenter and comedian

In 2020, British broadcaster Channel 4 secured the UK rights to broadcast the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

Since it first became a rights-holder broadcaster for London 2012, not only has it created the blueprint of how a commercial broadcaster can raise the profile of Paralympic sport, its promotion of persons with disabilities within its on- and off-screen talent has been equally ground-breaking.

One person with a disability whose career has flourished is Alex Brooker. He first joined Channel 4 in 2011 as a trackside reporter on Para sport. During the London 2012 Paralympic Games he started to co-host *The Last Leg*, a satirical chat show where two out of the three presenters have disabilities. The multi-award-winning show has been a mainstay of Channel 4's prime-time Friday evening schedule ever since.

In this exclusive interview, Alex discusses the importance of Channel 4 in the promotion of Para sport and persons with disabilities, why broadcasting the Paralympic Games shows the power of sport, the importance of *Rising Phoenix* airing on Netflix and why representation matters.

**INTERNATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE: WHEN YOU AUDITIONED TO BE PART OF THE CHANNEL 4 PRESENTING TEAM AT THE LONDON 2012 PARALYMPIC GAMES, DID YOU THINK IT WOULD PLAY SUCH AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE WAY THAT PARALYMPIC SPORT IS PERCEIVED?**

**ALEX BROOKER:** When I auditioned for Channel 4, I wasn't really sure what the

coverage was going to be. Growing up, the bar was set really low. When you saw disabled people on television, they were always sad stories. I can never remember seeing any Para sport on TV. So when it said its aim was to have 50 per cent of the presenters with disabilities, I wasn't sure if it was going to be seen as tokenism.

I was nervous about putting myself in the spotlight because I had a misconception that maybe society just didn't want to see us. It became clear during the auditions how serious Channel 4 was taking it. The game changer for me was they showed us a screening of the *Meet The Superhumans* ad before it came out in 2012. It blew my mind: it was so uplifting and so in your face and I've never seen disability portrayed like that in anything being broadcast. That was genuinely when I was like, 'wow, this is going to be something amazing'. I came into London 2012 as a journalist who had avoided addressing his disability and left as a TV presenter who celebrated it.

**IPC: CHANNEL 4 HAS RESEARCH THAT 83% OF PEOPLE WHO WATCH THE PARALYMPICS CHANGE THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. THAT SHOWS THE POWER OF BROADCAST, DOESN'T IT?**

**AB:** It really does, and it works in many different levels. The Paralympic Games desensitizes people to disability, and that's even true of me as a disabled person. When I see something new I do a double take, and I've felt that way at the Paralympics many times. In Rio, there was a Danish equestrian rider called Stinna Kaarstun. She has no legs and she was on a horse. It took me a few seconds to get my head

around it, and then I thought of all the youngsters watching that and how amazing it was to see.

I also think people at home now see it as an elite sporting event, which is huge progress. After a while of watching Jonnie Peacock, you forget you're watching a guy on a blade. You realise you're just watching this guy running extremely fast. Athletes are getting the credit for what they do and how hard they train: this is not sport that anyone can do and we're watching some of the best athletes on the planet.

**IPC: WHAT WOULD A 12-YEAR-OLD ALEX BROOKER MAKE OF TODAY'S PARALYMPIC GAMES AND THE COVERAGE OF IT?**

**AB:** For me as a kid to have seen the way the Paralympics are broadcast now would have been incredible. My knowledge of Paralympic sports was reduced to posters you'd see at the local limb fitting centre. It wasn't real. There certainly weren't the crowds that said this is a big sporting event. I'd have given anything to see something like a Paralympic Games as a kid.

And increased awareness is important: broadcast coverage like Channel 4's has created more opportunities for disabled people to get into sport. People see it and think, 'I want to try that'. Of course not everyone's going to be a Paralympian, that's not how it works, it's more the mindset of 'someone like me could do that'. And that's a really big thing. When we talk about the power of sport, the Paralympic Games are the absolute pinnacle of that power.



**IPC: OVER THE LAST DECADE, WHAT PROGRESS DO YOU THINK HAS BEEN MADE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, AND WHAT STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE?**

**AB:** When you talk about diversity and representation on television - and I say this as someone working in the industry - disability is close to the bottom of the pile in terms of diversity and inclusion. Things are improving; they are better than 2012 when I started and when Channel 4 announced in 2010 its big scheme to have half of presenting talent with a disability. Ten years on, there are more opportunities.

However, there's a long way to go. If there were loads of us in soaps, dramas, and films, then it wouldn't be an issue. Hollywood, in particular, still seems to treat disability as something to be played about with. It does get frustrating. That's why I spoke out about the film *The Witches* and its portrayal of limb deficiencies. I genuinely think in the making of that film someone's gone, "If we remove some fingers, it might look scarier". Until we get away from those thought processes, progress for persons with disability on screen will be slow. And that's disappointing when disabled people make up such a large percentage of the world's population.

**IPC: IS THAT WHY *RIISING PHOENIX* WAS IMPORTANT, THAT IT EDUCATED AND ENTERTAINED PEOPLE AT THE SAME TIME?**

**AB:** 100 per cent. After watching *Rising Phoenix* I felt incredibly proud to be disabled. To have such a huge disability-focused programme on such a widely consumed medium as Netflix is a very big deal. So many young people watch Netflix, and it gets the message about the Paralympics and disability far and wide across the world.

It's also just an amazingly good film. There were so many wonderful parts to it. I really enjoyed the interviews with Matt Stutzman, he's just an incredible guy. We had him on *The Last Leg* in Rio 2016, and he was incredible. And I really loved Beatrice Vio as well. She was just so passionate about her sport and her life. Every single story was fascinating, but also very different.

That broad church element was central to a documentary I did for the BBC in 2020. Disabled people are not a homogenous group. Their experiences are not the same. There's such a big difference between people who have acquired disabilities, and people who have been born with them. The bigger point is we're all just humans at the end of the day and we live, work and love like everyone else.

**IPC: IN 2020, THE IPC SIGNED A NEW BROADCAST DEAL WITH CHANNEL 4 FOR THE PARIS 2024 PARALYMPIC GAMES, BY WHICH TIME IT WILL HAVE BEEN THE UK RIGHTS HOLDER FOR 12 YEARS. IT HAS RAISED THE BAR NOT ONLY WITH ITS LIVE PARA SPORTS COVERAGE BUT IN ITS ASSOCIATED PROGRAMMING. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS ITS LEGACY?**

**AB:** It's shown other broadcasters around the world that there is an appetite for this programming, for this sport, and for persons with disabilities to be represented. The thing is, how could there not be? There are over a billion persons with disabilities across the world, so it's almost crazy sometimes to think that there has ever been a time when this sort of programming was not on.

I'm really proud to be a part of Channel 4. That 50 per cent of disabled talent it said it would have in London; well, it did that. The important thing is it don't rest on its laurels. In Tokyo, the aim is for 70 per cent of our on-screen talent to have a disability. How cool is that? Channel 4 is really are pushing the boundaries of broadcasting and I look forward to seeing how it continues for Paris and beyond.



“Broadcast coverage like Channel 4's has created more opportunities for disabled people to get into sport. People see it and think, 'I want to try that.'”

**Alex Brooker** Journalist, presenter and comedian

# HOW PARTNERS CAN HELP DELIVER SOCIETAL CHANGE

By Craig Spence, Chief Brand and Communications Officer, International Paralympic Committee



Leonor Espinoza Carranza has been supported by the NPCDP Athlete Support Programme on her journey to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. The Para taekwondo athlete, who was Peru's flag bearer for the Opening Ceremony of the 2019 Parapan American Games, competes in the women's K44 -49kg category.

The Paralympic Games are the world's number one sports event for driving social inclusion. And that is important as brands increasingly develop purpose-led marketing strategies - as our broadcast and commercial partners know, the Paralympics are different from other rights properties.

Without a doubt you get world class sport, where the standards are raised at every Games, but we also transform attitudes towards the 1.2 billion people across the globe who have a disability. We create opportunities for them to be active members of society. We ensure that host cities and countries initiate change through laws and accessible infrastructure. The Paralympics are different because they offer the prospect to deliver societal change through sport.

And people are increasingly alive to this opportunity. Nielsen data shows that global awareness of the Paralympic Games in 2015 was 65 per cent, but that figure increased to 85 per cent by 2020. The demographics of this target group are slightly younger, higher educated and often from households with children.

Those seeking inspiration should look no further than Channel 4. In 2012, it changed the broadcast landscape of Para sports. From powerful promotional campaigns to running a recruitment scheme to ensure 50 per cent of its on-screen presenters had a disability, Channel 4 has delivered record audiences for Para sport.

Channel 4 wants to maintain its prized position as a world leader in inclusion. In August 2020, it continued its longstanding commitment to Paralympic sport by securing the UK media rights to the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. In its pitch, Channel 4 outlined a new element of its partnership that will be reaching out and informing persons with disabilities that everyone has a route to exercise.

For businesses, besides building brand awareness and exposure, its involvement and support for the Paralympic Movement is an opportunity to build an inclusive work culture which can bring growth. Accenture research found that companies championing inclusive work environments for employees with disabilities achieved on average across four years, 28 per cent higher revenue, doubled net income and 30 per cent higher economic profit margins.

Athlete standards are improving worldwide thanks to partner support. Over the last three years, Toyota has invested hugely in the National Paralympic Committee Development Programme, which aims to increase the knowledge, skills, capacity, and opportunities for NPCs at all levels to develop Para athletes and Para sport. It helped 74 Para athletes compete in the 2019 World Para Athletics Championships and seven countries will likely make their Paralympic Games debut in Tokyo.

Of course, it is important for the IPC to increase the revenue base so that we can support the organisation of the Games and the betterment of our media products. However, with this process, our intention is also to open and refresh new and ongoing dialogues with interested parties to understand how we can enhance the Paralympic Games experience, increase the reach of Para sport as a celebration of human diversity and, ultimately, maximise the social impact of the Paralympic Games.





# FINANCIAL REPORTS

Argentine swimmer Daniela Gimenez trains at home during the government-ordered lockdown to stop the spread of COVID-19 in June 2020 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She works out every morning supervised by her coach via conference call.



# PRUDENCE AT THE HEART OF IPC'S FINANCIAL PLANNING IN 2020

2020 was a year like no other for many IPC departments, no more so than Finance. Having to deal with a marked decline in revenues because of the pandemic, the team worked hard to successfully ensure the IPC's sustainable planning remains on track.

The IPC appointed Deloitte as independent auditors to conduct a voluntary audit of the annual financial statements for the financial year end 31 December 2020.

During the 2020 financial year, the IPC report total revenues of EUR 19,276,939 and incurred total expenses of 19,261,609.

### IPC REVENUE

Due to the postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games and multiple other sport competitions, the IPC's revenue for the 2020 financial year decreased by 26.7 per cent compared to 2019, falling from EUR 26,287,137 to EUR 19,276,939

Compared to 2019, the specific project revenue declined by 91.3 per cent to EUR 102,530. This is primarily because all activities that we planned during the 2020 Paralympic Games were shifted to 2021, following the postponement of the Games.

The World Para Sports were heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Five sports out of 10 had all their competitions cancelled. Consequently, the World Para Sports saw their revenue go down from EUR 5,956,361 in 2019 to EUR 884,151 in 2020, a decrease of 85.2 per cent.



Elite athlete, mother and physiotherapist Sandrine Martinet of France won Para Judo gold in the women's up to 52kg at Rio 2016. She'll be back in the up to 48kg class at Tokyo 2020.

In the area of marketing and broadcasting fees from Paralympic Games Organising Committees, sponsorship and fundraising efforts, EUR 14,219,078 was raised, an increase of 14.1 per cent on 2019.

The remainder of the revenue came from membership fees, grants, broadcasting projects, special project funding and other sources.

### IPC EXPENDITURE

In March 2020, soon after the postponement of Tokyo 2020, the IPC instructed all core departments to reduce their budgets by 20 per cent in anticipation of the reduced revenues resulting from the pandemic.

This meant the amount spent by the main core departments went down from EUR 5,528,743 in 2019 to 3,437,360 in 2020.

Because of the cancellations of many sports events and competitions, the expenditure of the World Para Sports decreased from EUR 5,960,207 to EUR 1,453,382 (down 75.6 per cent on 2019).

In terms of non-IPC sports, grants totalling EUR 475,000 were provided to international federations, while the Association of Paralympic Sports Organisations (APSO) received EUR 25,000. The Agitos Foundation received grants worth EUR 1,425,000.

Project expenses decreased from EUR 1,496,633 in 2019 to EUR 662,547 in 2020, mainly due to the rescheduling of several Paralympic Games related projects.

Operational core expenses, including administration, day-to-day running costs, depreciation of assets and software and staff salaries grew slightly to EUR 8,203,355, up 10.9 per cent against 2019. The higher number reflects mainly the increase of the headcount from 123 to 134 and the rent of additional office premises.

Overall, the IPC's expenditure in 2020 decreased from EUR 26,269,328 to EUR 19,261,609 (down 26.7 per cent compared to 2019).

In line with IPC's prudent risk approach, unspent monies of EUR 2,400,000 were allocated to a Paralympic Games projects dedicated provision.

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL CONDITION

(as of 31 December 2020)

ASSETS	2017	2018	2019	2020
Fixed	469,728	785,911	663,664	513,243
Current	3,142,079	2,685,437	2,963,545	3,068,188
Advance paid	0	7,547,659	16,545,980	18,351,249
Cash and Bank Balances	8,750,017	16,345,048	17,363,267	19,455,968
Prepaid	1,815,269	474,877	380,454	667,489
TOTAL ASSETS	14,177,093	27,838,932	37,916,911	42,056,139

EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	2017	2018	2019	2020
Equity	6,867,253	8,980,499	11,342,223	11,722,552
Provisions	3,230,715	4,167,270	3,300,090	6,368,853
Advance received	0	8,604,078	18,655,321	20,108,289
Liabilities	1,770,911	3,147,750	2,301,625	1,195,212
Deferred	2,308,214	2,939,335	2,317,652	2,661,233
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	14,177,093	27,838,932	37,916,911	42,056,139



# STATEMENT OF INCOME

(as of 31 December 2020)

REVENUE	2017	2018	2019	2020
Membership fees	304,450	304,359	308,470	308,575
Marketing and Broadcasting/ Sponsoring/Fundraising	11,218,905	10,923,742	12,463,636	14,219,078
Grants	2,246,381	1,714,428	1,963,897	2,020,773
Broadcasting projects	1,818,905	1,324,992	1,428,462	871,371
Other	932,626	872,097	1,199,196	870,461
Extraordinary income	0	3,296,013	1,794,181	0
Specific	746,784	2,715,433	1,172,934	102,530
World Para Sports	4,551,551	2,988,469	5,956,361	884,151
TOTAL REVENUE	21,819,601	24,139,534	26,287,137	19,276,939



Ricardinho captained Brazil to the football 5-a-side gold at Rio 2016 and will return for Tokyo 2020. He lost his sight aged eight, but has gone on to become one of the most iconic players in the game.



Rwanda has qualified for its second consecutive Paralympics at Tokyo 2020 in sitting volleyball. It became the first Sub-Saharan women's team in history, in any sport, to compete at the Paralympic Games at Rio 2016.

EXPENSES	2017	2018	2019	2020
Executive Office	1,027,286	1,001,714	831,876	449,941
Paralympic Games	182,788	197,639	306,594	85,060
Administration	7,653,340	6,851,553	7,398,130	8,203,355
Sport and IFs	474,955	500,000	500,000	500,000
Athletes Classification, Medical Sports Science	339,982	774,686	463,571	218,389
Commercial and Partnerships	185,883	227,162	493,683	239,647
Broadcasting Projects	1,363,384	1,405,959	1,258,188	614,996
Marketing and Communications	450,668	572,931	680,945	716,507
Membership Engagement and NPC Development	2,133,065	2,765,860	2,891,700	1,570,007
Other	0	0	1,493,886	1,112,821
Specific Project Expenditure	988,054	3,619,315	1,496,633	662,547
World Para Sports	4,551,551	2,988,469	5,960,207	1,453,382
Allocation to/use of (-) reserve funds/provisions (net)	-227,067	121,901	-376,085	3,069,957
Allocation to earmarked reserves	200,000	1,000,000	0	0
Allocation to unrestricted reserves	2,470,000	2,100,000	2,870,000	365,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	21,793,889	24,127,189	26,269,328	19,261,609

RESULT	25,712	12,345	17,809	15,329
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# THANK YOU TO OUR PARALYMPIC PARTNERS

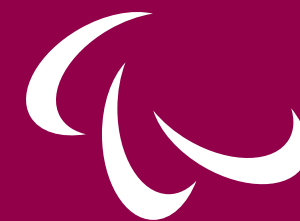
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## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS



## INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS



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