

# Evaluation of the Olympic Education Model Hoodlinks, under the Perspective of Coaches of Youth in Marginal Areas

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**Abstract:** The “Hoodlinks Olympic Education model”, consists in the application of the ethic and moral values promoted by the Olympic Movement through physical education in children and adolescents living in marginal communities through structured sports. It is done via extracurricular physical education and qualified coaches, rendering social, health, cultural and educational changes to provide a better quality of life. The model has been applied successfully in Guatemala since 2012. The intention of this investigation is to find out if by the perspective of the Hoodlinks coach, it is possible to reach the changes if lifestyle of these youngsters. Semi-structured interviews to coaches who had been implementing the model during 24 months were analyzed with qualitative software. The results show that the changes seen and registered by the coaches indicate advancement of the social cohesion that the model seeks. The coach’s leadership and pedagogic input are important to reach the Hoodlinks model goals and the application of the model is in the right path under the coach perspective.

**Key words:** Sports coach, youth, values, risk areas.

## 1. Introduction

The Olympic Games are the major global sportive and cultural event, attracting a diversity of billions of people around the world [31]. Olympism is the most important sociological force of the XXI century. There is no other cultural, scientific, political, philosophic or artistic activity that gathers such a huge group of followers [8].

“In its role as leader of the Olympic Movement and guardian of the Olympic ideals and values, the [20] has worked tirelessly for over a century to place sport at the centre of the harmonious development of mankind. Of course, sport alone cannot enforce or maintain peace. But it has a vital role to play in building a better and more peaceful world. Sport can facilitate dialogue between different communities and be a catalyst for mutual understanding in our society”.

The IOC promotes human development programs, based on the evolution of the sport, cultural support and its importance in relation to education, physical activity and health.

The Olympic Values Education Program (OVEP) [19, 21] has proven to be efficient so that, on a daily and sustained manner, life skills are built with a value-based approach using sport as a tool to reach young people [34]. The Program applies a methodology based on competences using creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, civic literacy, communication skills and self-directed learning. It was used for adapting and developing the Olympic Education model Hoodlinks for youngsters of marginal areas.

This model emerges as a contribution to the solution of social conflicts and the vulnerability of young people living in high risk areas of the city of Guatemala, who from early age join the criminal gangs, have too much free time after school and little chance to have a healthy life with no access to

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physical activities and sport.

Violence is one of the most important issues in Latin American cities; social factors that facilitate it are social inequality, few employment opportunities, high expectations with little chance to meet them, changes in family structure and loss of importance of religion in daily life. There is a high density population in poor areas and urban segregation, masculinity cult and an influential local drug market. There is also an increase in the firearm possession, alcohol consumption and difficulties expressing feelings [6].

Gangs, gang related violence, organized crime, and other illegal economies origin violence that conducts to homicides mostly in youngsters between ages 15 and 29 in Central America. This is caused partially by the move from the countryside to bigger cities, leading to unemployment of young men, dislocated families, poor government services and availability to get firearms. There is a lot of impunity and corruption and in many parts of Latin America; reduction of homicides is not a high priority [10].

United States' large scale deportations of convicts and other youngsters of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, who have been exposed to US violence on gang related killings, have probably helped the spreading of gangs and violence in the region [3]. It has homicide rates that vary from 40-60 per 100,000 persons over the last 10 years [1]. Violence is localized, most crimes are committed in the victim's neighborhood or near it [35] and are related to organized crime groups and gangs, occurring primarily between young men of low socioeconomic background to display strength or territorial control [37].

On the other hand, the subject of physical education in public schools in Guatemala is not properly delivered; approximately one third of the whole student population, including private schools have Physical Education practice, revealed an interview with a former technical director of the Guatemalan

government institution in charge of Scholar PE, and not all of them are specialized teachers [32]; there is no public access to this information. The same happens in many countries of Latin America, where there is no infrastructure to practice sport in a systematic way and the government not always provides with this excellent tool for youth to empower with a better physical and psychological health. The proper application of the Physical Education subject could be a way to give youngsters a sense of belonging and to work as a team, to be disciplined and respect the rules of the game while improving sport competition as well [29].

[39] also believes that one of the main problems found in the development of scholar sport in public schools is the lack of the right educational policies, giving more importance to the classroom lectures than the scholar practice and competitions. [2] agrees with this, stating that probably because of the decrease of scholar competitions and the shortage of infrastructure to practice, there is less participation in scholar sports.

Nowadays there are many countries that include the Olympic education in their national curricula of Physical Education, as well as in other subjects [27].

"The assumption that sport is a distraction from education is wrong", Thomas Bach, President of the IOC said. "Physical activity greatly supports education. It teaches values, social skills, to respect rules and to work in a team. You learn it by doing, and sometimes you learn without even knowing ... Sport serves and supports education" [17].

Young people are key agents for social change, economic development, and technological innovation. Their vision, ideals, energy and imagination contribute to the development of society. The sport as a promoter of development, foster leadership, good citizenship and self-esteem has been used before, but just recently the sport towards achieving development and social change goals has gained an important role [28].

### *1.1 The Hoodlinks Olympic Education Model [5].*

This model has been defined and tailored to the community needs, introducing several options of structured federate Olympic sports by professional coaches trained in Olympic education and social management of risk areas, to bring ethical-moral values and a sense of belonging to youth through sport and pedagogic procedures. It works with children and young people from 6-18 years old living in marginal areas in Guatemala City. It is also working in Tegucigalpa, Honduras since 2016, sponsored and managed by the countries' government [18]. These two cities have been rated by the international press as some of the most violent cities in the world [33]. Hoodlinks model was also introduced in the southern part of Belize City, Belize, in 2018, and is sponsored by the local government [7]. Both sport projects in Honduras and Belize were launched with the guidance and support of the Inter American Development Bank (IDB).

One coach is hired for each sport half time from Monday to Saturday. In Guatemala, the projects started working with 6 coaches for 6 sports, athletics, boxing, badminton, gymnastics, judo and taekwondo, the last two replaced wrestling and handball after 3 years.

The management in Guatemala is provided by a nonprofit organization, a foundation that manages financial activity, marketing (sponsors, donors) and logistics. Inter institutional contribution is provided by the IOC, the National Sports Federations and the support of all the national sport institutions, providing health service, spaces for practice, training and education for coaches and participants, and more.

This extracurricular model provides with activities that not only help develop new athletes for the sport system but also to the cognitive, motor, intra and interpersonal capacities by occupying the adolescents free time in an amusing way. Therefore it helps with the psychosocial development of the individual and its social and cultural integration.

The coach, facilitator, sports teacher, PE teacher or sport educational leader, is vital to convey the essence of the Hoodlinks model for youngsters. The present study explores the perception of several Hoodlinks coaches over the project beneficiaries' social changes.

As a way to question the next concern arises: Is the Hoodlinks model being transferred to youth of marginal areas in a proper way under the perspective of the sports coach?

More information was needed about the transference effectiveness of Olympic Education using the Hoodlinks model and the different pedagogic procedures to improve the coach manual of operations.

The intention of this investigation is to learn if the Hoodlinks model strategy is in accordance with the perception of the Hoodlinks coach, to learn about their recommendations on how to make the model more effective. They are many hours daily in the community. Their commitment plays a major role over the effective application of the model to contribute to the social integration of youth in marginal neighborhoods.

### *1.2 The Olympic Values*

The three essential values of the Olympic Movement are "excellence", "friendship" and "respect". "Universality" is also considered an important value of Olympism. Other virtues are derived from these like effort, teamwork, integration, overcoming, companionship, commitment, fair play, among others, and are based on principles such as non-discrimination, sustainability, humanism, universality, solidarity, and the association of sport with culture and education.

Olympic values contribute to the combination of sport, culture and education aspiring to ideal human beings, encompassing moral and ethical standards that are the strategic base of Olympic education. The programs through the Department of International Cooperation and Development of the IOC contribute to human development around the world [19]; the Hoodlinks project "Enlace entre Barrios" in

Guatemala, was one of the favored throughout the first years.

### *1.3 Importance of the Educator-Coach as a Transmitter of Olympic Education*

The teacher, who shows commitment to educational practice, ethically assumes its authority and freedoms granted to students. This authenticates the development of the character in the educational space. Freedom of learners contributes to building a genuine discipline climate. The ones responsible for teaching, with the right attitude, are able to overcome barriers to the difficult task of changing the world, even knowing that there are obstacles generated by the prevailing material, economic, social and political, cultural and ideological conditions [11].

Some authors believe that developing knowledge of teachers focused on Olympic education is a difficult task. The Olympic philosophy offers attitudes, values, ideals, ethics applicable to their daily lives to those who engage in sports and other physical activities.

The New Zealander researcher Thorn [36] states that teachers have difficulty explaining personal constructs but should take the education of young people with the Olympic education approach. Physical educators understand the importance of provided by these holistic and socio-cultural fundamentals, applicable to everyday life. But there are many pedagogical challenges in teaching while trying to implement attitudes and values in their educational programs. Thorn states that more investigation must be done about Olympic pedagogy to make it more explicit and easily applicable.

Great Olympic Movement thinkers in the recent history like Muller, Parry, Naul, Binder, Durantez and others, confirm that properly guided sport practice, is a powerful tool to reach many personal and social positive goals. Following the Olympic education approach as an alternative for children and young people to learn about health and physical education, participants feel responsibility towards their environment and themselves and strengthen learning

to develop positive attitudes in all aspects of his life, physical, mental or emotional [30, 25, 19, 26, 9].

## **2. Methodology**

The present research used qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews [15] or guided interviews [12]. This technique is used to develop or test propositions about social life, analytic induction process commonly used by researchers [16].

In addition, in this study the experience of the researcher and knowledge of the model project of the settlement environment and the studied community were considered.

Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews recorded with a recent technology device, with three Hoodlinks educators (coaches) from a contact, an artistic competitive and a team sport, who for analysis and privacy were assigned codes. These coaches had been part of the sport project that applies the Hoodlinks model for two years. The sample was chosen with the objective of improving the Olympic education model and to gain practical knowledge through their perceptions. Their contribution is valuable to approach the social change, community integration, transfer of Olympic education and the pedagogical methodology they use.

Hoodlinks coaches were initially trained regarding the Olympic themes and pedagogical tools, following up the methodology proposed by the Canadian pedagogue Dr. Deanna Binder and the OVEP teaching manual [22]. They were also given a marginal areas social induction. Table 1 shows the instrument content of the semi structured interviews held.

The Hoodlinks coach profile requires that he/she meets high profile academic and experience criteria. The coach needs to have a degree in Physical Education, sports and recreation, coach certification in the selected sport, to be endorsed by the national federation, to have experience in high performance sports of at least 3 years and as coach for children and adolescents and basic software knowledge.

**Table 1 Semi-structured interview. Instrument content.**

Topic	Information in depth
Identification	Date, place, code, age, sport, job, time of working in the project.
Experience with the model application	Personal opinion about the Hoodlinks (HL) model.
HL model methodology	Explanation about planning for classes and practice.
Changes in the participants	Academic, social, technical, and physiological level.
Recommendations	How to improve the model.
Difficulties	Problems in the settlement. Use of information and confidentiality.
Acknowledgments	Collaboration is appreciated. Indication about the use of the information for investigation purposes.

### 2.1 Interview Instrument

The semi-structured interview instrument inquires about experience, pedagogic methods used to teach values, changes seen in participants in the project, difficulties and recommendations.

A qualitative research software was used, information was encoded and summarized by categories to facilitate the ordering and subsequent analysis of the variables.

### 2.2 Qualitative Analysis

Using a computer software program for qualitative information (MaxQda version 11), shown in Table 2, 3 documents, 45 codes (see E-2 in Table 3) and 11 segments (Table 4) related to social changes (Sp. Translation: *cambio social*) were created.

### 2.3 Analyzed Variable

The analyzed variable of this qualitative research was community integration and social competences,

referred to as “*social changes*”. It includes social relations management, the community, peers and the teacher-student relationships and the experience of teachers adapting to the prevailing situations. Social changes make reference to conditions that affect the youngsters after two years of participation within the project using the model. The Hoodlinks coach perceptions regarding the effectiveness of transfer of Olympic education to this group were analyzed. The coding of this variation leads to dividing the categories into two parts, the *Social Abilities*, and the *Olympic values*.

The category encoded as *Social Abilities* includes internal and external social assets; interaction with parents, peers and community and their influence on the youngsters participating in the project. Points of view about women’s inclusion, positive values, social competences and identity were also considered. And also, the identification of the coaches with the model and with the job they were doing was also analyzed.

**Table 2 Number of segments qualitative analysis.**

<b>Max Qda file</b>	
Number (N) of documents or transcriptions	3
N of codes and sub codes	23
N of coded segments	104
<b>Excel File from Max Qda</b>	
N of recovered segments	104
<b>Documents</b>	
N of categories and subcategories of documents	1
Qualitative coding	
N of codes first division	4
N of sub codes in intermediate segments	10
N of sub codes in minor segments	9

**Table 3 Document system. Qualitative analysis Max Qda File.**

Category	Count
Documentos	104
E-1	25
E-2	46
E-3	32
Conjuntos	0

**Table 4 Coding system. Qualitative analysis Max Qda File.**

Code	Count
Sistema de códigos	104
CAMBIO FISICO-DEPORTIVO	6
metodologia fisico-deportivo	8
CAMBIO ACADEMICO	7
metodologia academico	1
CAMBIO SOCIAL	6
metodologia social	10
padres familia	2
Inclusion femenina	2
Identificacion con el proyecto	8
Valores	2
Trabajo en equipo	3
Respeto por los demas	3
balance cuerpo, mente y espiritu	3
Busqueda de la excelencia	6
Alegria del esfuerzo	1
Juego limpio	1
Sugerenas	7
No.ninos por entrenador	6
Instalaciones	3
entorno social	7
tecnologica	2
implementacion	4
logistica	6
Conjuntos	8
Conjunto 1	8

The category encoded as *Olympic values* consisted of the group of values that were more influential to reach social changes in youngsters under the coach's perception.

*Categorized values:*

(1) Social Change

(a) Social Abilities: applied pedagogy, parents, women inclusion, and identification with the project.

(b) Olympic Values: teamwork, respect for others, balance of body, mind and spirit, striving for excellence, joy of effort, fair play, team work.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Social Change in Reference to Social Abilities

##### 3.1.1 Teaching Techniques

According to the coaches, there were difficulties mastering the group attendance at the beginning. The transfer of the Olympic education was achieved and they applied the OVEP manual adapting the lessons

learned in the initial training. Significant progress and a favorable transfer of the model were achieved. They agreed that the most important issue was the value application in children.

##### 3.1.2 Assessment Techniques Olympic Values

There was a gradual application of the model. The three coaches agreed that the assessment of values had a positive development. The Hoodlinks model managed ways to reach objectives and the effective transfer of Olympic education. The evaluation of the value system was socialized, asking the children and adolescents how they felt and if they sensed changes. Ongoing assessments and self-assessments were made to create self-awareness to the child. Peer participation was promoted to develop positive criteria. Arts and crafts were encouraged among the activities. Coaches believed that children became more dynamic and creative as they did theater improvisations, creating their own characters. Self-made puppets with recycled material were also made. They found this to solve the

lack of supplies. Children were instructed to apply ethical and moral values to their performances and activities. The Hoodlinks coach's manual was useful. The IOC promotes culture and art as part of the integral formation of young people and the release of their imagination through arts and sports [19].

Among various forms to assess social changes were the colored cards weekly test to evaluate behavior and their way of denoting their changes, it included auto evaluation and coach and peers evaluation. Each color had a number from 1 to 5, from red being 1 to green, 5. All coaches thought this was effective. Another instrument that records behavior in children and manners was also effective to have a better control of the changes.

### 3.1.3 Autonomy in Pedagogic Methods

Regarding the teaching of values two coaches used different methodology. A 26-year old coach believed that memorization of each value was unnecessary, while another one 41years old enforced the opposite.

The older coach made youngsters memorize the Olympic values and their meanings; they recited them and seemed to understand them. The beneficiaries that trained with the youngest coach, did not memorize values, but were shown to apply them. This is confirmed by studies of [11], who believes that one of the essential qualities of teachers is the educational autonomy, since teaching is a human specificity, self-confidence, and firmness with which it is taught contributes to achieving the necessary authority to learning. In both cases, the coaches agree that fundamental changes in participants have occurred in relation to the application of values and that objectives of Olympic education have been reached. Each uses different ways to achieve learning.

### 3.1.4 Influence of Parents or Guardians

The three coaches agreed on the influence of parents as the major limiting factor for both learning and teaching of values. The negativity that exerts many parents, limited the implementation of Olympic education. They agreed that lack of values at home, no

permission to attend training and no support of value teaching were a problem.

Some parents did not allow children to train, either for personal or religious reasons. They said that children needed to engage in other activities such as tasks, work at home or outside of it. Coaches tried to convince parents of the importance of sport activities and value transmission, especially when it could make a difference in the youngster's lives.

Not every parent or guardian gets interested in the sport project, but the coach should inform all of them and try to get them involved constructively. When the coach manages well the participation of the athletes, they gain respect and support from the parents [24].

Some parents or guardians did not apply values in their life. Some have stolen the communal training equipment and have threatened the coach. The coaches agreed that it is important to raise the parent's awareness and make them realize that values should be implanted in young people. Parent capacitating must be part of the project as well.

Andersen and Wold [4] found that the influence of parents has an important effect on their level of participation in physical activities. Their findings indicate that, by serving as models and supporters, they impact the level of physical activity in young adolescents.

### 3.1.5 Gender Equality

Female participation was achieved in wrestling and handball. However the difficulty of getting similar female-male participation prevails, except in gymnastics, where the opposite phenomenon happens. On a male dominant society female inclusion is one of the positive sides of the social changes promoted by the project, the coaches say.

This lack of female participation is confirmed by a US study that states that there are still important concerns about the gender-appropriate sports issue in college students. Some sports are rated masculine, including the action sports even if these incorporate elements considered traditionally feminine. The media

images should include more women to raise participation of women in sports and fitness activities [13].

The coaches perceived a rotation of girls from gymnastics, the most popular sport among females, to other sports with better competitive opportunities; either they were more sport talented for the other sport or their biotype was better adapted to it.

#### 3.1.6 Identification with the Project

The interviewed expressed a clear identification with the goals of the project; they were motivated, feeling useful to society and implied a clear sense of belonging. The statements of [11] coincide in this regard in that teaching requires commitment. He believes that the teacher is responsible for delivering changes in reality, should fight to promote improvement and must be convinced that this is possible. Martens [24] also agrees that since much of the youth cannot find in their immediate surroundings activities that help with the development of commitment, structured sport can be a motivating challenge that is worth trying. The Hoodlinks model proposes positive changes in youngsters and the interviewed coaches expressed their willingness to promote them.

### 3.2 Social Change in Reference to the Olympic Values

#### 3.2.1 Positive Social Change

There was progress in social relationships; the values promoted by the Olympic education were applied by the Hoodlinks model. They expressed that “radical” changes have been achieved, that “everything (talking about the Olympic and civic values) had captured their attention in a positive way” and that the youngsters were applying “respect” into their daily lives. However, according to research by Thorn (2010), which highlights the challenges that educators face when using the Olympic approach, it is much more difficult to transfer the Olympic philosophy, especially because many do not know how to explain Olympic knowledge. Important

pedagogical challenges must be made to implement positive attitudes and values. More research on Olympic pedagogy must be done.

In any case, successful coaches teach sport abilities, but they also set examples and share life skills knowledge. They need to know about sport science (psychology, pedagogy, physiology, management and planning) as much as they motivate athletes to pursue positive changes in a practical way [24].

The importance of the coach-teacher is crucial to transfer Olympic education and values. He/she is responsible for promoting self-esteem of young people to enhance their image and enjoy their educational experience. Coaches are examples, solearners must be completely convinced of the importance of the values that the teachers transmit [23].

#### 3.2.2 Olympic Values

(1) Respect for others. Children are now aware of respect; they are still learning to respect others and to show by example. The Hoodlinks model emerges to help resolve social conflicts and the vulnerability of young people in marginal areas. The perception of coaches in this regard is that respect is being achieved and pedagogical skills are an advantage in Olympic values teaching.

One respondent coach mentioned the lack of respect for others shown by two youngsters who were part of the project and their mother; they never returned two pairs of special competition shoes, with a high monetary value and shared by the team. Neither of them returned to training, leaving the rest of the team without them. When the coach tried to retrieve them, the boys’ mother, an aggressive woman who lives in the settlement, challenged him in a risky way. The coach decided not to interfere and to use the incident as a pedagogic way to show how a non-emphatic action affected the rest of the group. It is not fair play and is something that should be understood by parents. Again, the three coaches advise the parent training to improve the performance of children.



(2) Balance of body, mind and spirit. Teaching Olympic values is an integral process; sport practice must be done in conjunction with the mind and spirit; respondents have revealed that this balance has been effective. By combining the sport with the application of values, a good learning balance was achieved. A similar model is the one proposed by Hellison [14], which intends that the physical educator encourages making thoughtful, intelligent decisions off the field as well. Strategies that include moral, humanistic and behavioral approach to physical education must be included and the educator strategies to discipline problems, power struggles, leadership, and other methods and techniques should also be considered.

(3) Pursuit of excellence. The respondent coaches have a sports training base, so it is clear that from the beginning have sought sporting excellence. However, youngsters give importance to the utilization of this excellence to extrapolate in their personal lives. Deanna Binder, one of the developers of the first version of the Olympic Education Program manual [22] agrees with the approach of the pursuit of excellence to help young people make positive and healthy choices and to try to be the best they can be in whatever they do.

(4) The joy of effort. When developing and practicing physical, behavioral and intellectual skills, young people are challenged through physical activities, games and sports. Although not overtly stated in the study, conclusions can be made about the significance of the mere attendance at practices. It implies that the participants enjoy being part of the educational process in Olympic values.

Young children are active; as they grow older these changes, specially girls and teenagers both genders, so they need to be motivated with a variety of inspirational methods and activities, use music, play, fun and joyful activities [22].

(5) Fair play. The International Fair Charter states that it does not only mean adherence to written rules, but describes the right attitudes of sportsmen and

women and the right spirit in which they conduct themselves. Coaches agree with this statement saying that fair play in sport can transcend to its implementation in the community and in life. They try to work on respect within the project.

The use of drugs to enhance sport performance is a lack of "fair play". Although coaches say that children in the project do not have a drug problem, they still emphasize about the negative consequences of drugs or alcohol use. One of the respondent coaches mentioned that there was drug dealing and alcohol consumption within youngsters in the surrounding area.

(6) Team work. Coaches agree that teamwork is one of the most important principles to achieve the social coherence in the community. Teamwork has been transferred to the children and youth involved in the project that applies the Hoodlinks model. It has been done based on awareness of the importance of values of cooperation, sense of belonging, respect for the peers, and the perseverance done by reinforcement and repetition.

Yukelson [38] found that team building core components must be considered for a successful intervention, with a shared vision and unity of purpose, working with collaboration and synergy, individual and mutual accountability, identity as a team, positive team culture and cohesive group atmosphere. There must be good communication processes, peer helping and social support, and trust at all levels. He recommends effective team building interventions, miscellaneous team building activities, and that coaches try to have a positive impact on the team building process.

#### 4. Conclusions

The Hoodlinks coaches are the key to success for delivering proper integral education to children and adolescents in marginal areas. Sports, exercise and physical education professionals may empower the people they serve and contribute to community

development. Empowerment oriented and community based programs could help sustainable development in different areas such as human health and well being, diminishing harms done by poverty, social exclusion, social isolation and inter group conflicts. Development of human capital, especially in vulnerable youth, the sense of belonging or collective identities, the promotion of social networks and associations should be done. More investigation needs to be done on these topics.

The pedagogical methods to apply values used by the coaches are guided by a coaches' manual, which is being updated continuously. The teaching and motivational methods used are also part of their autonomy, although different pre sport games are offered. Activities are recorded in their teacher's planning. Besides these, the manual has a monthly Olympic value that they need to apply by using videos, movies, theater plays, expositions, art expressions, etc. This study has helped with relevant information for the Hoodlinks coaches' manual.

The Hoodlinks manual that consists in a "good practice manual" is important to provide the educators and stakeholders with guidelines to deliver values, plan trainings and report all activities periodically.

The qualitative results in this study indicate that the perception of the Hoodlinks coaches based on their 2 years experience within the project concerning the transference of Olympic education of young participants is effective and it influences positive changes in youth living in this particular marginal neighborhood.

The interviews evidence improved community integration and social cohesion. These apparently small steps into social changes are a sign of important positive progress.

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